
LIBRARY OF THE VICEROY'S HOUSE

ASOKA

The Carmichael Lectures, 1923

ASOKA

BY

D. R. BHANDARKAR, M.A. (BOMB.),

HON. PH.D. (CALCUTTA), F.A.S.B., CARMICHAEL PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

PUBLISHED BY THE

UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

1925

PRINTED BY BHUPENDRALAL BANERJEE,
AT THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY PRESS, SENATE HOUSE, CALCUTTA.

To

His Highness Maharaja

SAYAJIRAO GAEKWAR,

G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.,

Sena Khas Khel Samsher Bahadur,

The only Indian ruler at present living,

who, striving for the spiritual as well as the

temporal welfare of the people, and

eager to ascertain the truth in every religion,

may rightly be looked upon as an

Incarnation of Asoka.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

So much has been said and written about Aśoka that some of those who happen to see this book may perhaps wonder what new things yet remain to be said about that Indian monarch. It must not, however, be forgotten that the records which Aśoka has left in stone are a literature by themselves, and it will take many years yet for scholars to understand clearly all that he has said. A student of Indian Epigraphy need not be told that there are passages, by no means few, in these records, which are yet far from clear, and every day new and better interpretations are being proposed by scholars. There is, again, such a thing as piecing together the various items of information supplied by these inscriptions so as to give a vivid picture of the royal missionary. I am afraid, this work of piecing together is by no means complete yet and must continue for some more years to come. There is no section of Indian epigraphy, so interesting and, I should say, so edifying as that represented by the records of Aśoka. And as I have participated not only in the work of interpretation but also of collation and unification of his records, I hope I stand in no need of explanation for bringing

out this book which sets forth my views about the Buddhist monarch.

My study of the inscriptions of Aśoka began as early as 1898. There were before me translations and notes on these records not only by Prinsep, Wilson and Burnouf, but also by Prof. Kern, M. Senart and Prof. Bühler. I devoured the contents of all these books. But none interested and benefited me so much as "the Inscriptions of Piyadasi" by M. Senart which had appeared in English garb in the pages of the *Indian Antiquary.* I could at once detect in the French savant not only an epigraphist, not only a scholar of Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit, but also a historian whose aim was to piece together the different scraps of information supplied by the epigraphic and literary records so as to form one connected whole. Chapter IV of his book thus sets forth not only the chronological position of Aśoka or his inscriptions but also the extent of his empire, his administrative system, his independent neighbours, his connection with the Grecian world, his conversion to Buddhism, the nature of his Dhaṁma and so forth. It was M. Senart who first showed the way how to construct the history of Aśoka from a systematic study of his records.

It will thus be seen that it is nearly a quarter of a century that I have studied the

inscriptions of Aśoka with a view to find out what light they throw upon the history of India. What real advance, if any, I have made can be best told by scholars and historians. Eager to know, however, how far my attempt has become successful, I sent to the French savant the page proofs of the first seven chapters of this book as soon as they were available, with a request that he might tell me unreservedly what he thought about it. But for a long time no reply was received, and just as this Preface was being put in type, the long expected letter came to hand. "You will forgive a delay," it begins, "due to the somewhat shaken health of an old colleague. I would have wished to thank you sooner for having sent me the good pages of your Aśoka. You kindly remembered the studies which I devoted years ago to the religious king and his precious inscriptions. How should I not be impressed by the testimony of such an enlightened judge as yourself? You can imagine that these researches of my youth are always dear and present to me. Your book leads me back to them once more. I am very grateful to it. I am grateful because it has brought me a brilliant example of the ingenious and passionate skill with which Modern India endeavours to reconstruct its past."

M. Senart is frank enough in this letter o tell me in what points he differs from me,

All of these represent minor differences of opinion except one. This last is in regard to the responsibility I have thrown upon Aśoka (which in his opinion the monarch little deserved) for his change of foreign policy, "for the mansuetude of his pitiful reflections," which rendered easy the success of foreign invasions, Greek and Turanian, that infested the country after him. "It is quite possible," says he, "that Buddhist Pacifism in the long run has tended to weaken certain people, whom it did not render more gentle except by making them less fit for action[2] .... I prefer to recognise in him simply a spirit of idealism and of deep religiousness which we know well, for it animates the whole remote past of India and it has perhaps stood for a greater spiritual honour than it has deprived India of realisations of external successes, for which it is doubtful whether its genius ever had

[2] In justice to myself I may state that this idea also had occurred to me, but I had to discard it as the interval was too short between Aśoka and the Greek invasion after him. Aśoka is taken to have died about 236 B.C.; and the death of Euthydemus, the first Bactrian Greek invader, is supposed to have taken place about 190 B.C. There is thus scarcely an interval of fifty years, during which, again, Antiochus the Great is reported to have carried out a successful expedition into the north-west frontiers of the Mauryan Empire (*The Cambridge History of India*, pp. 442 and 444). The Greek invasion thus came off almost immediately on the death of Aśoka. Does it give enough time to Buddhism to spread and make the people, above all, the Magadha army, as gentle and pacific as to render them unfit for militarism—just that army which Alexander's men were afraid to encounter and which repulsed the forces of Seleucus after him?

made it fit." When, therefore, he has favoured me with such frank criticism, one feels inclined to believe, as a sincere expression of his opinion, the following that he has given to show what he thinks about my work as a whole : "It was not so much your purpose to establish a critical history of Aśoka by a general examination of the traditions more or less in keeping with the epigraphic information, but you intended to show by an analysis of the inscriptions what information hitherto unexpected they can yield to a sagacious and penetrating explorer. You have been prepared for this task as nobody else by your extended familarity with literature. It is a marvel of a singular power that by throwing light on the monuments with the help of books you have enlivened your picture."

There are many questions connected with Aśoka, which are still of a complicated nature. One of these is the effect of his foreign policy on India. How far or whether Buddhism had spread over Western Asia through his missionary efforts is another such question. It is not possible to reach any final conclusions unless they are freely and fearlessly discussed. I have expressed my views for what they are worth, and it would now be interesting to see what different views are expressed by scholars and, above all, historians. The more diverse these opinions are, the more are the viewpoints from

which the questions may be looked at and the greater is consequently the likelihood of arriving at early solutions of them.

It is true that history, and not epigraphy, is the main object of this book. Nevertheless, time has not yet come and perhaps may never come, so far as Ancient India is concerned, to separate History altogether from Epigraphy, Archaeology, or Sanskrit and Sanskritic literature. There are still some words and passages in the Aśokan inscriptions which require to be properly interpreted or understood though Dr. F. W. Thomas has done a yeoman's service in this field recently. I have, therefore, by no means neglected this source of our ancient history. That I have given sufficient attention to it may be seen especially from Chapter VIII which contains translation and annotation of Aśoka's Edicts.

I have said that the Aśokan inscriptions have engrossed my attention for a quarter of a century. But I cannot help adding that much progress in this respect I was able to achieve only when I came to Calcutta to occupy the Chair of the Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture and breathe in the pure intellectual atmosphere of the Calcutta University, which is the unique creation of the monumental genius of the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, Sarasvati, whose guidance, I should

say, providence, in the development of the post-graduate studies is now for ever lost to us. He was specially interested in the publication of this book. And it will for ever be a matter of extreme regret to me that he was not spared just a little longer to see this book which has now come to light after being two years in the press.

The Index of this volume is the work of Mr. Girindra Mohan Sarkar, who was my pupil some time ago. As regards proof-reading and general help, I am highly indebted to Mr. Jitendranath Banerjea and Mr. Nani Gopal Majumdar, Lecturers of the Calcutta University, and also to my pupils Mr. Rakhohari Chatterji and Mr. Chintaharan Chakravarty. And I cannot better conclude this Preface than with the words with which the French savant concludes his letter: "To this famous ancestor you, true to the beautiful traditions, familiar to solid knowledge, wanted to render the tribute of your researches and the inspirations of your patriotism. If I cannot, in order to do you full justice, enter into a detail which would compel me to exceed the limits of a letter, allow me at least to address to you my hearty felicitations. I like to place this fertile union of sympathy and work—in which the piety of India and the respectful curiosity of the West should join—under the patronage of our hero in common."

D. R. B.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR-ASEC—Annual Report, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle.
ASI-AR—Archaeological Survey of India—Annual Report.
ASSI—Archaeological Survey of Southern India.
ASWI—Archaeological Survey of Western India.
CASR—Cunningham's Archaeological Survey Reports.
CCII—Cunningham—Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
CHI—Cambridge History of India.
CII—Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
CL—Carmichael Lectures.
EB—Encyclopaedia Britannica.
EC—Epigraphia Carnatica.
EHI—Early History of India.
EI—Epigraphia Indica.
ERE—Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
EZ—Epigraphia Zeylanica.
GI—Gupta Inscriptions.
HAS—Hyderabad Archaeological Survey.
HASL—History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature.
HIEA—History of Indian and Eastern Architecture.
IA—Indian Antiquary.
JAOS—Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JASB—Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
Jat—Jātakas.
JBBRAS—Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
JBORS—Journal of the Bihar Orissa Research Society.
JDL—Journal of the Department of Letters (Calcutta University).

JPTS—Journal of the Pali Text Society.

JRAS (NS)—Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (New Series).

MASB—Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

MASI—Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.

PR-ASNWFP—Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of North Western Frontier Province.

PR-ASWI—Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of Western India.

PTFOC—Proceedings and Transactions of the First Oriental Conference, Poona.

PTS—Pali Text Society.

SAMSJV—Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volume.

SBB—Sacred Books of the Buddhists.

SBE—Sacred Books of the East.

VOJ—Vienna Oriental Journal.

VP—Vishnu Purāna.

ZDMG—Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Jesellschaft.

CHAPTER I

Aśoka and His Early Life

There is hardly any educated person in India who has not heard of Aśoka and his stone inscriptions. Aśoka, he knows, was a prince of the Mauryan dynasty, and grandson of Chandragupta, the Sandrakottos of the Greek writers and, for some time, a contemporary of Alexander the Great. The inscriptions of this monarch, he again knows, have been found all over India. But he may not be aware of their contents and may not know what account they furnish of that Mauryan king. There are, no doubt, some Buddhist works, which set forth his life and work, but their trustworthy character has been rightly called in question. They mention many stories, which represent him to have been Kālāśoka or Black Aśoka before, and Dharmāśoka or Pious Aśoka after, his conversion to Buddhism. As the one aim of these works is to eulogize Buddhism by showing how it transformed Aśoka the Ogre into Aśoka the Pious, a suspicion

naturally crosses our mind in regard to the correctness of their account. Such is not, however, the case with his epigraphic monuments, which being contemporary records and engraved with his orders, are of undoubted veracity. Nay, as we go through them, we feel as if his voice is still speaking to us and confiding what is passing in the innermost recesses of his mind. The story of Aśoka that is being narrated is based almost entirely on these monuments, and we can be pretty certain that our account is not fiction, but history.

What kind of records has Aśoka left behind him ? Are they sufficiently numerous and important in details ? A full account of his epigraphic monuments at this stage is sure to be irksome, and has, therefore, been reserved for a future chapter. But some idea of the nature of these records must be given here, in order that the contents of this and the following chapters may be properly understood. These records, as we know, are all engraved on stone. They have been inscribed either on rocks or pillars or in caves. His rock inscriptions, again, are of two kinds : namely, (1) the Fourteen Rock Edicts and (2) the Minor Rock Edicts. The former are called Fourteen Rock Edicts, because they together form a set of fourteen different inscriptions following a serial order, and have been found in seven different localities,—all on the

confines of India. The Minor Rock Edicts consist of two different records. They are inscribed together only in the three copies found in Mysore; in all other places, which are no less than four, Edict I. only has been engraved. Aśoka's Pillar inscriptions also may be distinguished into two classes: (1) Seven Pillar Edicts, and (2) the Minor Pillar Inscriptions. The former of these constitute a group, but the latter are four different epigraphs. The Cave Inscriptions of Aśoka are, of course, those engraved in caves in the Barābar Hills of Bihār. These are altogether no less than thirty-three different inscriptions, and, as we shall see in the course of our narrative, they throw light on a number of points connected with Aśoka, his administration, his religious faith, his missionary operations, and so forth. A careful comparison of these records is just what is needed in order to obtain the maximum that is knowable and historically acceptable about Aśoka.

Those who have studied these epigraphs know full well that they profess to have emanated from a king who calls himself Piyadasi, that is, Priyadarśin. When they were first being deciphered, now about three-quarters of a century ago, by James Prinsep to whom must go the credit of having unravelled the mystery of the Brāhmī *lipi*, he was very much puzzled by the name Priyadarśin. He did not know who this

Priyadarśin was, to what dynasty he belonged, and in what age he flourished. Soon thereafter, however, Turnour, who belonged to the Ceylon Civil Service, and was himself a great Pāli scholar, identified Priyadarśin with Aśoka. He pointed out that the Sinhalese chronicle, the Dīpavaṁsa, gave Piyadassi or Piyadassana as but another name of Aśoka, grandson of Chandragupta, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty. This identification, it is true, has not since then been called in question, but it was definitively demonstrated only six years ago when the sixth copy of Minor Rock Edict I. was discovered at Maski in the Sholāpur District, Nizam's Dominions. For this inscription mentions the name of Aśoka clearly and in the very first line. It is not therefore possible now to doubt that Priyadarśin and Aśoka are one and the same person, and that the author of these inscriptions is really the grandson of Chandragupta, who founded the Mauryan empire.

We thus see that the author of our epigraphic records was known both as Aśoka and Priyadarśin. It was customary for the kings of ancient India to have more than one name, of which one was their proper individual name and the others epithets or *birudas* as they are called. One of these two appellations must have been the personal name of the king, and the other his epithet. And it appears that Priyadarśin was

his epithet, for we know that Aśoka's grandfather, Chandragupta, has also been styled Piyadassana like him in one of the Ceylonese chronicles. Nobody can doubt that Chandragupta was his individual name. Priyadarśana or Priyadarśin must, therefore, be taken to be the *biruda* or secondary name. We know that this epithet in the case of Aśoka was Priyadarśin, and it is quite possible that Priyadarśin and not Priyadarśana was the *biruda* of his grandfather also. For in later times we find grandfather and grandson of one and the same dynasty adopting the same *biruda*. The Ceylonese chronicles style Aśoka not only Priyadarśin but also Priyadarśana, taking the two words apparently in one and the same sense. And as from Aśoka's inscriptions we find that he was known really as Priyadarśin and not Priyadarśana, it is natural to presume that his grandfather also was Priyadarśin, not Priyadarśana. It is curious that his records call the king, Aśoka only once, and, Priyadarśin, in all other places. But instances are not wanting of kings being known almost invariably by their epithets. Thus the son of Govinda III. of the Rāshṭrakūṭa family of Mānyakheṭa is known to us from all the documents so far only by his epithet, Amoghavarsha. We are somewhat better in regard to the author of our inscriptions. For one record at least gives his personal name, Aśoka.

In most of his inscriptions Aśoka styles himself Devānāṁ-priya Priyadarśī rājā. This is the fullest appellation of the king. But sometimes the formula is abbreviated by the omission of one or two of these components. Thus we find Aśoka designated also Devānāṁ-priya Priyadarśī, Priyadarśī rājā, Devānāṁ-priya rājā, or even Devānāṁ-priya merely.[1] The second component of Aśoka's full name is Priyadarśin, which we have just considered. Literally it means 'one who sees affectionately', and may be freely rendered by 'one who is of gracious mien'. When and why he adopted this epithet we do not know, but certain it is that he used it almost as his personal name. We had better not, therefore, translate it, but leave it as it is. It is worthy of note that although Aśoka was a supreme ruler, he designates himself simply Rājā. The grandiloquent titles, Mahārāja and Rājādhirāja, employed singly or conjointly, had not come into use in Aśoka's time. What is more worthy of note is that he calls himself Devānāṁ-priya, and one can well understand how the modern students of Grammar (*vyākaraṇa*) may feel inclined to laugh at it. For do not Bhaṭṭoji Dīkshit, author of the *Siddhānta-kaumudī*, and Hemachandra, author of the *Abhidhāna-chintāmaṇi*, tell us that Devānāṁ-priya means 'a fool' or 'dunce'? They are, therefore, apt to wonder

[1] JRAS., 1908, 482-3.

what Aśoka means by calling himself Devānāṁ-priya. But it is to be noted that though this word has now a derogatory sense, it was not so originally, and especially in the time of Aśoka. Patañjali, we know, associates this word with *bhavat*, *dīrghāyus*, and *āyushmat*. This shows that like these honorific terms Devānāṁ-priya was employed as an auspicious mode of address or characterisation. Now, if we turn to Rock Edict VIII. of Aśoka, we shall find that for *Devānāṁ-priya* of some versions we have *rājāno* of others. This means that Devānāṁ-priya was an auspicious mode of address used with reference to kings. And, as a matter of fact, the Dīpavaṁsa[1] applies the appellation Devānāṁ-priya to Tissa, the ruler of Ceylon and contemporary of Aśoka, and often employs it alone to denote that king. Epigraphic records also point to the same conclusion. Thus in the Nāgārjunī Hill cave inscriptions,[2] the term Devānāṁ-priya is used to designate a king called Daśaratha, who has been taken to be the grandson of Aśoka. Similarly, an epigraph from Ceylon gives this epithet among other kings to Vaṅkanāsika-Tissa, Gajabāhuka-gāminī, and Mahallaka-Nāga.[3] Devānāṁ-priya was thus an auspicious mode of address or honorific

[1] XI, 14, 19, 20, 25, &c.

[2] IA., XX. 364 & ff.

[3] EZ., I. 60 f.

characterisation, before the Christian era, confined to the kings only, and was so used probably to indicate the belief that the rulers were under the protection of the gods (*devas*). The term had therefore be better translated by "dear unto the gods," or "beloved of the god." Aśoka's full royal style was thus "king Priyadarśin, beloved of the gods."

Many of Aśoka's inscriptions commence with the formula: *Devānaṁ-priyo Piyadasirājā evaṁ āha*, "thus saith king Priyadarśin, beloved of the gods." This has been rightly compared by M. Senart[1] with the phrase with which the proclamations of the Achaemenides, from Darius to Artaxerxes Ochus, begin. One such instance is *thātiy Dārayavaush kshayāthiya*, "thus saith the king Darius." In both cases the form of address commences with a phrase in the third person, and what is further worth noticing is that this phrase is immediately followed by the use of the first person. Of course, nobody can now maintain that this formula was imitated by Aśoka directly from Persia, for, as a matter of fact, we know that this was one of the protocols of the royal chancery noticed by Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra and consequently prevalent before the time of Aśoka.[2] But nothing precludes us from holding with the French savant

[1] IA., XX. 255-6.
[2] Ibid., XLVII. 51-2.

that the Indians adopted the Persian protocol and that this adoption was due to the Achaemenian conquest and administration of north-west India.

Wherever in his records Aśoka gives any dates, he counts the years from the time of his coronation. This has led scholars to believe the Sinhalese tradition that Aśoka was crowned four years after his accession to the throne. But this tradition also tells us that after the death of his father, Aśoka seized the throne by massacring ninety-nine of his brothers, and spared only one, the youngest, namely Tishya. This story is, however, refuted by his inscriptions which speak, not of one brother, but of several, living and staying again not only in Pāṭaliputra, his capital, but also in various towns of his empire. And if this is found to be a fiction, it is not intelligible why we should hold fast to that part of the tradition which places his coronation four years after his seizing the throne. In fact, it is not at all clear how his dating certain events of his reign from his coronation is evidence of there having been an interval between his coronation and accession to the throne. Again, in the Nāgārjunī Hill caves there are at least three inscriptions which are dated immediately after the coronation of Daśaratha, grandson of Aśoka. Are we to suppose here also that because these records, in their

dating, refer to Daśaratha's coronation, this event did not coincide with his coming to the throne and that some period must have elapsed between them? There is therefore no good reason to think that any long interval such as that of four years elapsed between Aśoka's coronation and his assumption of the reins of government.

It appears that Aśoka was in the habit of celebrating the anniversary of his coronation by the release of prisoners. This is inferrible from what he says at the end of Pillar Edict V. "During the period that has elapsed until I had been anointed twenty-six years", says he there, "twenty-five jail deliveries have been effected". As prisoners were released twenty-five times in the space of twenty-six years, it means that the twenty-sixth year of his reign had not elapsed but was going on when the Pillar Edict was promulgated. It thus shows that the dates which he specifies for the incidents of his life are current regnal years, and not expired, as has been taken by scholars.

Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra lays down that the king shall prohibit castration and destruction of animal fœtus on certain days. Among these he includes the days of the *nakshatra* of the king and the country. In Pillar Edict V. Aśoka speaks of castration and branding of animals, and specifies on what days he has prohibited them. Curiously enough, most of these days agree

with those mentioned by Kauṭilya. And what is noteworthy is that here he specifies only two *nakshatra* days, namely, Tishya and Punarvasu. One of these is most probably the *nakshatra* of the king and the other of the country. And the question must arise: which *nakshatra* is of the king and which of the country? It is worthy of note that the Tishya *nakshatra* has been mentioned also in the two Separate Edicts of Dhauli and Jaugaḍā. These edicts, we know, were intended by Aśoka solely for the exhortation and guidance of the officials of the newly conquered province of Kaliṅga, and he issues the order that they shall be recited every Tishya day for their benefit. Evidently, of the two *nakshatras* greater importance has thus been assigned to Tishya than to Punarvasu. This may be seen also from the fact that although in the usual list of the *nakshatras* Tishya comes after Punarvasu, it is placed prior to the latter, not once but twice, in Pillar Edict V. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that as so much importance has been given to Tishya, that must be the *nakshatra* of the king. If this inference is correct, Punarvasu becomes the *nakshatra* of the country, by which, we suppose, we have to understand the country of Magadha.

The edicts of Aśoka are concerned with his Dhaṁma and the means he adopted to disseminate it. They naturally, therefore, throw a

flood of light on his life and career after he became a Buddhist. But let us here try and see what little these records tell us about his earlier life, both in his private and public capacity. We have already seen that he had several brothers and sisters living till the thirteenth year of his reign, and that they were residing not only in Pāṭaliputra but also in the muffasil towns. Of course, Aśoka had his *avarodhana* or closed female apartments. How many queens he actually had we do not know. But he had at least two, for there is reference to his second queen in one of his inscriptions. And the very fact that she had been designated Second Queen shows that the relative rank of the queens had in his day been fixed. The name of this Second Queen was Kāruvākī, and his son from her was Tīvara. The object of the inscription is to ensure for this queen the merit of any donation she might be pleased to make. In Pillar Edict VII. Aśoka speaks of his having commissioned some of his officers to induce the members of his royal household to make gifts and to see to their proper organisation. It is interesting to note what members of his family he mentions in this connection. Of course, he first speaks of himself and his queens. But immediately after his queens he makes reference to his *avarodhana* and tells us that its inmates were

living not only at his capital but also in the provinces. Anybody who reads the passage carefully cannot but think that his queens were not the only members of his *avarodhana*. Who could then be the other members? They cannot be the wives of his male relatives, for they cannot with propriety be called his *avarodhana*. Were they his left-handed wives? His *avarodhana* would thus comprise not only the queens but also other Purdah ladies of lower status. This no doubt reminds us of the Sinhalese tradition that when Aśoka during his father's life-time was viceroy at Ujjain, he formed connection with a lady of the Seṭṭhi caste, who resided at Vedisagiri, Besnagar near Bhilsā, and continued to reside there even when Aśoka seized the throne and his children from her accompanied him to his capital. This legend clearly confirms the inference deducible from the Pillar Edict that Aśoka had women other than queens and that his *avarodhana* was not all in Pāṭaliputra, but some of its members stayed in the mufassil. In the same Pillar Edict and in continuation of the same subject, namely, the distribution of the charities of the Royal Household, Aśoka speaks of his own sons and other *devī-kumāras*. The sons of Aśoka are thus distinguished from the latter. Who could the other *devī-kumāras* be? Most probably, Aśoka is here referring to the sons not of his own Devīs or

queens but the queens of his father and consequently to his non-co-uterine brothers. How many sons Aśoka had we do not know. But he must have had at least four sons. In ancient times it was customary for a king to appoint his sons, so far as possible, as viceroys of the outlying provinces. And four such princes we find mentioned in his epigraphic records, as being in charge of the four viceroyalties of Takshaśilā, Ujjayinī, Suvarṇagiri, and Tosalī. To what provinces these viceroyalties corresponded we will see in the next chapter. But what we have here to notice is that Aśoka had at least four sons. To sum up, Aśoka had a very large family. He had several brothers and sisters staying not only at Pāṭaliputra but also outside in the empire. Some of them were certainly his co-uterine brothers, but there were also some, sprung, no doubt, from his father, but by different mothers. Aśoka had also his *avarodhana* or closed female apartments, not only in his capital but also in the provinces. They were occupied not only by his queens but also other women with whom he had connection. He had at least two queens, one of whom was named Kāruvākī, and at least four sons. But whether Tīvara, son of Kāruvākī, was one of them it is not possible to determine.

We know very little of Aśoka's private life. His records shed very little light upon it. There is, however, one passage in Rock Edict VI.,

which is interesting. This edict describes how often and at what different places he dispatched the business of his people. Here he tells us that he has arranged to dispose of it at all places and at all times so that no king prior to him ever did it. Naturally, therefore, he specifies the places where he formerly whiled away his time but where now he attends to their affairs. "This, therefore, I have done", says he, "namely that at all hours and in all places—whether I am eating or I am in the closed female apartments, in the inner chamber (*garbhāgāra*), in the mews (?) (*vraja*), on horse-back (*vinīta*) or in pleasure orchards, the Reporters may report people's business to me". Evidently, therefore, when Aśoka had no business to dispose of and, of course, was not asleep, he was to be found at his capital either regaling in the dining hall, engaged with the inmates of his harem, chatting in his retiring cabin, or inspecting the royal stud, enjoying a horse ride, or beguiling his time in the orchards. What special tastes and fascinations he had developed or evinced in these matters we do not know, but we do know what articles of food gratified his palate. Even when he was rigorously carrying out his programme of stopping the slaughter and injury to living beings, he made certain reservations in regard to his royal table. "But even now when this document of Dhaṁma was written", says he in Rock Edict I., "only three

animals were killed for curry namely, two peacocks and only one deer, but even that deer not regularly. Even these three animals will not afterwards be killed". Aśoka here admits that although he has stopped the butchering of all other animals, he has allowed the killing of peacocks and deer to serve him meat. Evidently he was fond of the flesh of these animals. And as he says that the animal that was regularly butchered for his table was not the deer, but the pea-cock, it appears that he was inordinately fond of the pea-fowl. In this connection it is worth noting what Buddhaghosha says in his commentary on the *Saṁyutta-nikāya.* "To the people of the frontier provinces, *gaṇḍu-ppādas* are delicious, but they are abominable to those of the Middle Country. To the latter the flesh of a pea-fowl is delicious. It is, however, abominable to others."[1] It is, therefore, no wonder if Aśoka, who was a native of the Middle Country, could not for a long time give up the eating of the pea-fowl flesh. We need not, however, harbour any doubt as to his having ultimately eschewed it, as promised in his edict, and thus turned a staunch vegetarian.

In another inscription Aśoka gives us another glimpse into his private life. Rock Edict VIII. informs us that for a long time past kings were

[1] *Sāratthappakāsinī* of Buddhaghosha, published by Thera Vimalabuddhi in Ceylon in 1898, p. 105 & ff.

in the habit of going out on *vihāra-yātrās* or pleasure tours, where they enjoyed chase and other similar diversions but that he has replaced these by *Dhaṁma-yātrās* or tours for Dhaṁma since the tenth year of his reign when he visited Saṁbodhi, that is, the place where Buddha obtained enlightenment. What Aśoka gives us here to understand is that until the tenth year he, like all other kings, used to go out on pleasure excursions, where he indulged in manifold diversions, the most pre-eminent of which, however, was hunting. We cannot have any clear idea of this *vihāra-yātrā*, as Aśoka gives us no details and as no account of it is also forthcoming from any work of literature. The Āśramavāsika Parvan of the Mahābhārata, no doubt, contains a reference to the *vihāra-yātrās* which Yudhishṭhira organised for enabling Dhṛitarāshṭra to forget the grief caused by the death of his hundred sons. But only one verse it gives to show what items constituted these *vihāra-yātrās.* "There", we are told, "the *āralikas* (jugglers ?), chefs, and singers of *rāgas* and *shāḍavas* waited on king Dhṛitarāshṭra as in town ".[1] The programme of Dhṛitarāshṭra's pleasure trip thus consisted of music, dainties, and conjurer's tricks. There is no mention of chase here, because an old and blind man like Dhṛitarāshṭra cannot be expected to

[1] I. 18.

take delight in chase. But as Aśoka speaks of chase only and tells us nothing of the other diversions when he adverts to *vihāra-yātrās*, it appears that hunting formed the most important feature of a pleasure excursion in his time. In fact, hunting was so much indulged in by the kings that it was considered by some ancient writers on Hindu polity to be a vice which they were exhorted to avoid. Piśuna, for instance, condemns chase, because danger from robbers, enemies, wild animals, forest conflagration, fear of stumbling, inability to distinguish the cardinal points, and so on, are the evils consequent upon it.[1] Kauṭilya, on the other hand, strongly recommends it, because according to him exercise, reduction of fat and bile, skill in aiming at stationary and moving bodies, knowledge of the minds of animals and of their ever-changing movements when they are enraged are the good points of chase. Some of these good points, we know, are mentioned by Kālidāsa when Dushyanta in Act II. of Śākuntala is made to praise hunting. The poet also portrays a good scene of hunting in the first two acts of the drama. The description of royal hunting has also been preserved for us by Megasthenes, who was almost contemporaneous with Aśoka. One purpose for which the king leaves his palace, says he, "is to go to the chase, for which he departs in

[1] *Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, p. 327.

Bacchanalian fashion. Crowds of women surround him, and outside of this circle spearmen are ranged. The road is marked off with ropes, and it is death, for man and woman alike, to pass within the ropes. Men with drums and gongs lead the procession. The king hunts in the enclosures and shoots arrows from a platform. At his side stand two or three armed women. If he hunts in the open grounds, he shoots from the back of an elephant. Of the women, some are in chariots, some on horses, and some even on elephants, and they are equipped with weapons of every kind, as if they were going on a campaign."[1] The Śākuntala also, no doubt, describes the chase of Dushyanta as something like an expedition and even represents the king as being attended by Yavana women with bows in hand. One can very well imagine Aśoka as revelling in such sport in the earlier part of his life like his contemporary or previous kings, but the sanctity of animal life which made an indelible impression on his mind afterwards made his soul recoil from such enjoyment, and he gave up all sports and diversions which involved any kind of brutality or butchery to life.

We shall now try to see what Aśoka was like in his capacity as king before he became a staunch missionary of Buddhism. Very little about him even in this capacity is known, and

[1] IA., VI. 132.

what little we know is from Rock Edict I. From it it appears that like all other kings Aśoka was in the habit of feasting and amusing his subjects, —probably a diplomatic move to keep his people pleased and satisfied. One mode of public entertainment that he practised was the celebration of the *samāja*. *Samāja* was of two kinds. In one the people were treated to dainty dishes in which meat played the most important part. In the other they were treated to dancing, music, wrestling, and other performances. The former was obviously a convivial meleé. The latter was intended for the amusement of the people, and in this sense *samāja* was synonymous with *raṅga* or *prekshāgāra*, that is, the amphitheatre, and sometimes denoted 'the concourse of the people', assembled there. All the instances of the *samāja* described in the Brahmanical and the Buddhist literature show that they were intended to feast the palate or the eye and the ear of the people. There can be no doubt that the ancient kings of India were in the habit of holding *samājas*. Thus in the Hāthigumphā inscription at Cuttack, we are told that Khāravela, king of Kaliṅga, amused his capital-town by celebrating *utsavas* and *samājas*. Precisely the same thing is reported in a Nāsik cave inscription to have been done by Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, a king of the Dekkan. And, in fact, Kauṭilya himself lays down that a king shall

imitate the (people's) attachment to the *samāja*, *utsava*, and *vihāra* of their country or divinity."[1] Both the kinds of the *samājas* seem to have been celebrated by Aśoka. But when he began to preach Dhaṁma, he naturally tabooed those where animals were slain to serve meat, as we may infer from Rock Edict I. As there was nothing in the other *samājas* for him to object to, he retained them, but slightly changed the character of the exhibition of the public spectacles. He no doubt must have provided such spectacles as would not only cause amusement to his subjects but also generate, develop and disseminate Dhaṁma amongst them. What these scenes were we will see in a future chapter.

Reasons of state may also have dictated his taking another step in the same direction. In the same record Aśoka tells us that the slaughter of hundreds of thousand animals was daily going on in the royal kitchen before the edict was promulgated. The case is precisely like that narrated in the Vanaparvan of the Mahābhārata where we are informed that two thousand cattle and two thousand kine were slain every day in the kitchen of a king called Rantideva and that by doling out meat to his people he attained to incomparable fame. And, in fact, the practice of daily doling out food to hundreds of people

[1] *Arthaśāstra*, p. 407.

is still found in the Native States of India. Like Rantideva Aśoka must have been in the habit of distributing meat among his subjects, and that his object in doing so must have been precisely the same, namely, that of making himself popular. But he put a stop to this terrible animal carnage, the moment his conscience was aroused and he commenced teaching Dhaṁma.

We thus see what Aśoka was as a private individual and also as a king till he embraced Buddhism. The picture we have here is certainly not as lucid and full as we may desire, but we do obtain something which is reliable and not based on mere legend. We see what sort of family he had, what individual tastes and likings he possessed, and in what pursuits he engaged himself when he was free from his routine work as a ruler. We also know what titles he assumed as king, how he began his royal career, and what measures he adopted to entertain his people and enlist their attachment. He also regularly celebrated the anniversary of his coronation by releasing prisoners from jails. This is all we know of him as ruler before he became a Buddhist, that is, till after the eighth year of his reign when he subjugated Kaliṅga. Whether the earlier part of his reign was uneventful or whether he had made similar conquests or not we do not know. The earliest

event of his reign that we find referred to in inscriptions is his conquest of Kaliṅga, which roughly corresponds to the tract of land on the coast of the Bay of Bengal between the Vaitaraṇī and Languliya rivers. He vividly describes the horrors and miseries of this war. "150,000", says he, "were carried away (as captives); 100,000 were slain, and many times as many died." These are the figures for Kaliṅga only, and do not include the casualties in the king's army. We thus have to note that even in such a small province as Kaliṅga, as many as 100,000 were killed on the battle field, many times as many died of wounds and starvation, and, what is more, no less than 150,000 were seized as slaves. Surely, these are appalling figures for a tiny district like Kaliṅga, and indicate the extreme horrors of a war even in that ancient period when the weapons of destruction were not so diabolical and deadly as now. Soon after this war Aśoka was converted to Buddhism and began to preach Dhaṁma. And the remembrance of this war struck him with extreme and genuine remorse. When an unconquered province, says he, is being conquered slaughter, death and captivity must occur. This is regrettable enough. But what is exceedingly regrettable is that among those who die, are slaughtered or taken captives, there must be many who are devoted to Dhaṁma and that such

contingencies to these men, again, must spell disaster and affliction to their friends, acquaintances, and relatives who, though they themselves are safe, yet feel undiminished affection for them. "This is the lot of all men and is considered regrettable by the Beloved of the gods." The language is instinct with personal feeling, and the rocks still echo across the ages the wail of a penitent soul. There can be no doubt that this was genuine remorse. For when the edict was proclaimed, he had already commenced in that country a zealous protection, longing and teaching of Dhaṁma. When a territory is newly subjugated and is in an unsettled condition, the officers who are charged with proper administration and maintenance of peace there are apt to transgress the bounds of justice and mercy. Such transgressions did actually occur on the part of his officers, and we know from one of his inscriptions how severely he chastised them and what steps he took to prevent such excesses in the future. Nay, the inhuman and iniquitous nature of the war so much haunted his mind that he was even ashamed of engraving this edict in the Kaliṅga country. There are two places in Kaliṅga where his Rock Edicts have been inscribed. But while the edict which describes his conquest of this province has been incised along with other Rock Edicts at all other places this alone

has been omitted from the copies appearing in Kaliṅga. Surely remorse and sense of shame cannot further go.

We may be pretty certain that Aśoka made no further conquests. But why he conquered and annexed Kaliṅga to his dominions which were already very extensive must remain a mystery. How vast his empire was and how enormous the power he wielded we will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

Aśoka's Empire and Administration

In this chapter we shall attempt to trace, as far as possible, the limits of Aśoka's dominions and find out over what area his sway extended. And thereafter we shall also discuss how he administered his kingdom and what innovations, if any, he introduced. In both these enquiries we shall allow ourselves to be guided mainly by his inscriptions. In regard to the first of these queries, that is, the one relating to the extent of his empire, we have both internal and external evidence to take into account. The external evidence is, of course, that furnished by the find-spots of his monuments. Of these his Rock Edicts are of the highest importance to us, as we find that they have been discovered on the borders of this country. We will begin with the east, and move westwards. Two copies of his Fourteen Rock Edicts were found in the south-eastern part of his dominions, near the Bay of Bengal. Of these the northern copy exists near a village called Dhauli, about seven miles to the south of Bhubaneśvar, in the Purī District of Oṛissā. The southern copy is situated in the town of Jaugaḍā, in the Ganjām District of the

Madras Presidency. Both these versions of the Rock Edicts were inscribed in the newly conquered province of Kaliṅga, which, being in the south-easternmost part of India, must have also formed the south-easternmost boundary of Aśoka's empire. Turning northwards, we find that a third copy of Aśoka's Rock Edicts has been engraved on a rock near the village of Kālsī, in the Dehrā Dun District. Proceeding westwards, we have to notice two versions, both found in the North-West Frontier Province. One of these has been inscribed at Manserā in the Hazārā District, fifteen miles to the north of Abbottābād, and the other at Shāhbāzgaṛhī in the Peshāwar District, forty miles to the north-east of Peshāwar. Descending from here to the south and coming to the western coast, we have to note one copy that was discovered near Junāgaḍh in Kāṭhiāwāṛ, and another at Sopārā, in the Ṭhāṇā District, about thirty-seven miles north of Bombay. None of these Fourteen Rock Edicts has been found on the southern confines of Aśoka's dominions, and, in fact, for a long time not a single monument of this king was known to have existed on the southern frontiers of his empire. In 1903, however, thanks to Mr. Lewis Rice, three copies, not of the Fourteen, but of the Minor, Rock Edicts were discovered in three localities, all close to one another, in the Chitaldrug District of Northern Mysore. All these

Rock Edicts, whose find-spots have just been indicated, give us a fairly accurate idea of the wide expanse of Aśoka's territory. And we shall now see what the actual contents of these records have to tell us as regards this matter. In other words, let us see how far the internal, corresponds to the external, evidence.

In no less than two edicts (R.E., II. and XIII.) Aśoka speaks of contemporary kings. Of these those who were ruling outside India were the Yavana king Aṁtiyoka, and, beyond him, the four kings, Turamāya, Aṁtekina, Maga, and Alikasuṃdara. To the south of Aśoka's empire but in India were the Choḍas, Pāṃḍiyas, Keralaputra, Sātiyaputra, and Taṁbapaṁṇi. Again, it is worthy of note that in two places (R.E., V. and XIII.) Aśoka refers to his outlying provinces. They are the Yonas, Kaṁbojas, Gaṁdhāras, Rāsṭika-Petenikas, Bhoja-Petenikas, Nābhaka-Nābhapaṃtis, Aṁdhras, and Puliṁdas. Through the misreading and misinterpretation of one phrase in Rock Edict XIII., they had all for a long time been regarded as *Hida-rājas* or the feudatory chieftains in Aśoka's dominions. But the recovery of a lost portion of the Girnār version of this Edict repudiates the interpretation. And we have to take these names as those of subject peoples, forming some of the frontier districts of Aśoka's empire. It is highly essential to fix the boundaries of these districts first, and afterwards,

of the territories held by his independent neighbours in India.

Who were the Yonas? They were, of course, the Greeks. But where are they to be placed? It deserves to be noticed here that they formed part of Aśoka's empire and had therefore nothing to do with the dominions of his Greek neighbours. This Yona province, which was subject to Aśoka's power, has not yet been satisfactorily identified. But I have elsewhere shown[1] that there was a Greek colony of the pre-Alexander period on the north-west confines of India and that it was established between the rivers Kophen and the Indus. I still cling to that view. In Rock Edict XIII. Aśoka tells us that there is no country in his empire except that of the Yavanas, where are not found the two congregations,—the Brāhmaṇas and the Śramaṇas. This means that the Yavana province was the only country where the Hindu Aryan civilisation had not spread. How can this be possible in a neighbouring district of India except on the supposition that it was colonised by the Yavanas and had therefore the Hellenic civilisation only prevalent there? Again, if the Greeks had for the first time been known to the Indians in the time of Alexander the Great, they would have been known by another name, but certainly not by 'Yavana' (Ionian),

[1] CL., 1921, pp. 25 & ff.

because the Greeks who accompanied Alexander were not Ionians. It is in Ionia that the commercial development of the Greeks is the earliest and greatest. In the most distant regions the Ionian is first in the field.[1] Whether the Ionian had actually planted any colony on the north-west borders of India is doubtful. But there can be no doubt that it was on account of the enterprising spirit displayed by the Ionians that the Persians coined the word *Yauna* as a generic name for all Greeks. And the Greek colony on the north-west frontiers of India, whether those who established it were Ionians or other Greeks, may for that reason have been designated Yauna by the Indians, the neighbours of the Persians. Yavana is of course the Sanskrit, and Yona the Pāli, equivalent of Yauna. But even the form Yauna is by no means unknown to Sanskrit literature, and what is curious is that it is mentioned along with Kaṁboja and Gandhāra at least once in the Mahābhārata[2] exactly in the order in which they occur in Rock Edict V. of Aśoka. If my view that the Yonas are to be located between the Kophen and the Indus is correct, the ancient place whose ruins are found near Shāhbāzgaṛhī, where one version of Aśoka's Rock Edicts has been found, and which is called

[1] EB., XII. 445; XIV. 730.

[2] XII. 207. 43; attention to this was first drawn by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, in his *Early History of the Vaishnava Sect*, p. 17.

Po-lu-sha by Hiuen Tsang, becomes the head-quarters of the outlying province of Aśoka's dominions. And Kamboja will have to be placed somewhere near this Yona province. In the Mahābhārata the Kambojas are mentioned side by side with the Yavanas as (north-)western peoples famous as fighters. And in the Droṇa-parvan[1] their capital, Rājapura, is also mentioned. If this Rājapura is the same as *Ho-lo-she-pu-lo* mentioned by Hiuen Tsang[2] and if the latter has been correctly identified by Cunningham[3] with Rajaori to the south of Kashmir, we can locate the Kambojas with pretty certainty. It must have been the province round about Rajaori, including the Hazārā District of the North-West Frontier Province and with perhaps the head-quarters of a subdivision not far from Mansera (Mansahra) where was discovered one copy of Aśoka's Fourteen Rock Edicts. The province of Kamboja would thus be contiguous with that of Yona, and both with Gandhāra whose capital in Aśoka's time was Takshaśilā, the seat of a Kumāra viceroyalty, as we shall see further on.

M. Senart seems to be right in supposing that the outlying provinces have been enumerated in Rock Edict XIII. in a definite order. The

[1] 4. 5; I am in debted to Dr. Raychaudhuri for this reference.

[2] Beal, I, 163: Watters, I, 284.

[3] *Ancient Geography of India*, p. 129.

Nābhapaṁtis of Nābhaka must therefore be looked for somewhere between the Yona-Kaṃbojas on the one hand and the Bhoja-Petenikas on the other, that is, somewhere between the North-West Frontier Province and the Western Coast of India. This weakens Bühler's suggestion [1] that the Nābhaka of Aśoka's edict must be Nābhikapura placed by the Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa in the Uttarkuru or some Trans-Himalayan region. And no other scholar has yet come forward with a new identification. Turning southwards, Rock Edict XIII. mentions the Bhoja-Petenikas, corresponding to which Rock Edict V. has Rāsṭika-Petenikas. Scholar have so long separated Petenika from both Rāsṭika and Bhoja, and regarded it as standing for a separate people, namely, those of Paiṭhaṇ. But this is a mistake. Of course, it is possible to derive such a word as Peṭhanika from Pratishṭhāna (Paiṭhaṇ). But the word can mean "the inhabitants of Paiṭhaṇ", and not denote a tribal people like the Kaṁbojas or Gandhāras. Besides, Peṭhanika has a lingual *ṭh* and Petenika a dental *t*. The latter cannot thus stand for the former, as was first correctly pointed out by Bühler. Again, as I have elsewhere shown,[2] the phrase *Raṭṭhika Pettanika* occurs in the Aṅguttara-Nikāya as denoting a ruler of the

[1] *Beiträge zur Erklärung der Aśoka-Inschriften*, p. 118,
[2] IA., 1919, p. 80.

second rank, next only to the king, and the word *pettanika* has been explained by the commentator to mean 'one who enjoys hereditary property'. Rāsṭika-Petcnika of Aśoka's inscription must therefore be taken as one word and as denoting 'one who is the hereditary ruler of a *rāshṭra* or province', though originally his ancestor may have been a governor appointed by some king. There must have been many such in ancient India. But those of Rock Edict V. have to be located somewhere on the Western Coast, as they have been there classed under Aparāntas, 'peoples of the western coast'. They have naturally therefore to be identified with the Mahārathis of Western India cave inscriptions, who seem to have been petty rulers, holding the Poona and neighbouring districts of Mahārāshṭra. These inscriptions speak also of Mahābhojas as minor rulers and as holding the present Ṭhāṇā and Kolābā Districts of the Bombay Presidency. They must, of course, be the same as the Bhoja-Petenikas of Rock Edict XIII. and were another people of Aparānta impliedly referred to in Rock Edict V. The capital of Aparānta in ancient times was Śūrpāraka, the modern Sopārā, in the Ṭhāṇā District, where also one version of the Fourteen Rock Edicts was brought to light.

The region between the Kistna and the Godāvarī Districts is at present known as the

Andhra-deśa, that is, the country of the Andhras. But whether this was the original home of the people is not clear. One Buddhist Jātaka adverts to a place called Andhapura or the capital town of the Andhras and locates it on the Telavāhā river. I have elsewhere thrown out the suggestion that Telavāhā is either the modern Tel or Telingiri, both flowing not far from each other and on the common confines of Madras and the Central Provinces.[1] This rather shows that the country of Andhra must have at the early period comprised Jaipur and part of Vizagāpaṭam District of the Madras Presidency along with some conterminous districts of the Central Provinces. And it is not at all impossible that it may have also included the southern parts of the Nizam's Dominions, and the Kistna and Godāvarī Districts corresponding to modern Telingānā. Megasthenes gives us the numerical and military strength of the Andhra territory when it was yet unsubdued by the Maurya Dynasty. This account gives us the impression, as V. A. Smith[2] rightly says, that the Andhra nation "was reputed to possess a military force second only to that at the command of the king of Prasii, Chandragupta Maurya." This clearly shows that the Andhra country must have been a pretty extensive territory and must have spread

[1] *Ibid.*, 1918, p. 71.
[2] EHI., p. 206.

as far south as the mouth of the Kistna. This also agrees, as we shall see further on, with the most likely northern limits of the independent Chola kingdom. We have now to localise the Pulindas. It is true that the Pulindas were not confined to one single district, but are mentioned as occupying various separate provinces. But the fact that in Rock Edict XIII. they have been associated with the Andhras shows that we have to place them somewhere to the north or the north-east of the Andhras. In the Vāyu-Purāṇa the southern branch of the Pulindas has been placed side by side with the Vindhya-mūlīyas, that is, "those dwelling at the foot of the Vindhyas"[1], and in the Sabhā-Parvan[2] their capital is mentioned as Pulinda-nagara and their kingdom as contiguous with the Chedi country. The most likely position for Aśoka's Pulindas would thus be the Jubbulpur District of the Central Provinces, which includes Rūpnāth, the place where one version of his Minor Rock Edicts has been discovered.

The peculiarity with Aśoka's Rock Edicts is that they are found on or about the frontiers of his dominions. There is, however, this difference, namely, whereas the Fourteen Rock Edicts seem to be engraved in the capitals of the outlying

[1] *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*, translated by F. E. Pargiter, p. 335 and notes.

[2] 29. 11.

provinces, the Minor Rock Edicts mostly at places which separate his territory from those of his independent or semi-independent neighbours. That Dhauli and Jaugaḍā, where the south-easternmost copies of the Fourteen Rock Edicts have been discovered, represent Tosalī, the capital of an outlying province, and, Samāpā, the head-quarters of its sub-division is known to us beyond all doubt. A third version of these edicts has been found at Junāgaḍh, the ancient Girinagara, the capital of Surāshṭra, which, as we know from the inscription of the Kshatrapa ruler, Rudradāman, continued to be so till the middle of the second century A.D. A fourth copy, we have seen, was brought to light at Sopārā near Bombay, which we know was the principal town of Aparānta. When no less than four of these versions are at places which are known to be the capital towns of ancient provinces, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the remaining three copies also must have been engraved at the head-quarters of frontier districts. Of these Shāhbāzgaṛhī, for the reasons stated above, seems to be the chief town of the Yona province. And we need not be surprised if Kālsī and Manserā are in the near future found to be the head-quarters of similar outlying districts of his dominions. The case is somewhat different in regard to the find-spots of the Minor Rock Edicts, most of which have been found in the

midst of dense jungles with no ancient remains close by. There are only two exceptions here, namely, Bairāṭ and Maski. The former is known to be Virāṭapura, the capital of Virāṭa, king of Matsya-deśa. The latter has been called Piriya-Māsaṅgi in the Chālukyan records of the place. In all other places it appears that these inscriptions were put up almost at boundary lines which demarcated the kingdom of Aśoka from those of the independent or quasi-independent states. In Minor Rock Edict I. Aśoka expatiates on the paramount necessity of strenuous endeavour if the spiritual elevation of the people is to be accomplished and tells us that he was able to achieve a great deal even within a short space of time. And he causes this important fact to be notified with a two-fold object in view, in order first that all his officials, whether of the higher or the lower grade, may endeavour for the spiritual weal of the subjects, and secondly, that the Antas or rulers of the bordering states may also know of this, probably because they also may induce their officials to put forth effort with a similar object in view. In order that Aśoka's officials might exert themselves assiduously in this direction, it was not necessary for Aśoka to inscribe these edicts. Like all his behests he must have communicated this order also to them through the proper channel. The Minor Rock Edicts thus appear

to have been engraved for the information of his independent neighbours either in the heart of their capital towns or on the frontiers common to their and Aśoka's dominions. This point will clear itself up as we proceed to consider who these Antas or kings of bordering realms were.

It has been stated above that Rock Edicts II. and XIII. enumerate the Antas with whom he was on terms of independence and equality. They fall into two groups, according as they had their dominions in or outside India. The rulers constituting the first group, as we have seen above, are the Choḍas, Pāṁḍiyas, Keralaputra, Sātiyaputra, and Taṁbapaṁṇī. In the first place, it is worthy of note that while Choḍas and Pāṁḍiyas are mentioned in the plural, Sātiyaputra and Keralaputra are in the singular. The very fact that each one of the latter is spoken of in the singular also shows that Aśoka is here referring not to the peoples but their rulers. When, therefore, he is referring to individual rulers and also speaks of the Choḍas and Pāṁḍiyas in the plural, the only reasonable inference is that in Aśoka's time there were more than one Choḍa and one Pāṃḍiya king. The territories of the three of these four names have been identified on the data supplied by Ptolemy and the author of the Periplus. But it has not yet been noticed

that the former speaks not of one but two Choḍa kingdoms. The first is represented by "Orthoura, the royal city of the Sornagos," comprised in Soretai.[1] The word Sor in Sornagos and Soretai can easily be recognised to be the Tamil Sōṛa or Choṛa. And the name Sornagos clearly shows that the prince whose capital was Orthoura was of the Nāga tribe, but was called Sor (Choṛa), because he was a ruler of Soretai (Choṛatrā). Orthura has been identified by Cunningham with Uraiyur near Trichinopoly. This was, therefore, the southern Choḍa kingdom. The clue to the location of the northern kingdom is furnished by Ptolemy's remark that between Mount Bettigo and Adeisathros are the Sorai nomads, "with Sora, the capital of Arkatos".[2] "Sora, the capital of Arkatos" is considered to be a mistake for "Arkatos, the capital of Sora". Arkatos Caldwell identifies with modern Ārkāḍ (Arcot). The Sorai were most probably not nomads at all, but have been so called to indicate the Aryan contempt for the aboriginal tribes just as their name, namely, Choṛa (Soṛa), was used to denote "a robber".[3] There were thus two Choḍa kingdoms, with capitals at Orthura (Uraiyur) and Arkatos (Arcot). As regards Pāṇḍyas Ptolemy speaks

[1] I.A., XIII. 368.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 362.
[3] CL., 1918, pp. 8-9.

of them as "Pandinoi" and of "Modoura" as "the royal city of Pandion." This Modoura, is, of course, the same as Madurā of the Madras Presidency. The Pāṇḍya country according to Ptolemy included Tinnevelly on the south and extended as far north as the highlands in the neighbourhood of the Coimbatore gap. It is true that Ptolemy does not speak of two Pāṇḍya kingdoms as he does of two Choḍa countries. But that does not necessarily mean that there were no two Pāṇḍya kingdoms in Aśoka's time. Even as late as the sixth century A.D. Varāhamihira speaks of Uttara-Pāṇḍyas,[1] which shows that in his time there were two—the northern and southern—Pāṇḍya countries. The same may have been the case when Aśoka promulgated his edicts. At any rate, if it is assumed even for the moment that in his time there was only one Pāṇḍya kingdom, the tract of land represented by the Mysore State remains unaccounted for. On the other hand, if the existence of a Northern Pāṇḍya kingdom is presumed, this location can fit splendidly. Two of the remaining southern states are Keralaputta and Sātiyaputta. The ending *putta* reminds us of its Prākṛit equivalent *ot* (= Sk. *putra*) occurring in the names of some Rajput sects such as Bhārmalots, Bhūcharots, Bālots,

[1] *Bṛihat-saṁhitā*, XVI. 10.

and so on, and corresponding to the English ending "son" in such family names as Robertson, Stevenson, and so forth.[1] It therefore appears that tribes of the names of Kerala (Chera) and Sātiya were originally staying in North India from which they migrated to the south and established colonies which in the early period at any rate were known not as Keralas and Sātiyas but rather Keralaputtas and Sātiyaputtas. Instances are not wanting even in modern times of provinces being called after the migrated people known by a name derived from that of their original tribe.[2] The same thing must have happened in the case of Kerala (Chera) and Sātiya. From the Aitareya-Araṇyaka[3] we know that the Cheras were settled not far from Magadha. These were probably the Cheros of the Mirzāpur District, U. P., and one of their movements to the south before they were settled in Malabar is indicated by the mention of Keralas, in the *Pavana-dūta* of Dhoyika,[4] as being situated in Yayāti-nagara, which has been identified with a small town near Sonpur in the eastern part of the Central

[1] JASB., 1909, p. 168 & n. 4.

[2] The tracts of land, Śekhāvāṭī and Bidāvāṭī, in Western Rajputāna have been named after the Śekhāvats and Bidāvats who themselves were the descendants of Sekhā and Bīdā.

[3] II. 1. I.

[4] JASB., 1905, p. 44.

Provinces.[1] Similarly may not the original Sātiyas be the same as Setae placed by Megasthenes in the north[2] and mentioned by the Vishṇu-Purāṇa[3] and the Bhīshma-Parvan[4] but mis-spelt Satīpa or Sanīya? Where their colony to South India was planted is doubtful. Perhaps a critical examination of the data furnished for South India by Ptolemy and the author of the Periplus may afford us a clue. They speak of four countries in South India, Limyrike, Aioi, Pandioni, and Soretai. The last two, we have seen, are the Pāṇḍya and Choḍa countries respectively. Limyrike is taken to be equivalent to Damir-ike, the greater portion of which, however, was subject to Keralaputra. What about Aioi? If Andrakottos is sometimes written for Sandrakottos and Abiria for Sabiria, can Aioi be really Saioi (=Sātiya)? If this surmise is correct, the kingdom of Sātiyaputta may be represented by modern Travancore. As Damir-ike was held by Keralaputta, the latter's dominions must have included South Canara, Coorg, Malabar, and north-west parts of Mysore with perhaps the northernmost portion of Travancore. In the time of the author of the Periplus, Mouziris (=Muyiri-koḍu) or modern

[1] EI., XI. 189: *Descriptive Lists of Inscriptions in the C. P. and Berar* by Rai Bahadur Hiralal, p. 95 & note.

[2] IA., VI. 339.

[3] VP. (Wilson), II. 180.

[4] Chap. IX. V, 63.

Kranganur [1] was the seat of Keralaputta's government which when Ptolemy wrote was in the interior at Karoura, that is, Kārūr on the Cauvery in the Coimbatore District. [2] It is really very difficult to fix the exact boundaries of the southern states referred to by Aśoka, but it seems that they met one another and also those of his empire, in the north of the Chitaldrug District of Mysore. For it is here, as we have seen, that three copies of his Minor Edicts have been found. What could be Aśoka's object in incising three copies in close proximity of one another unless in that tract of land the southern kingdoms touched his dominions? These kingdoms almost certainly were those of the Choḍas (the northern) Pāṇḍyas and Keralaputra.

In this connection is worth noting another people or country to which Aśoka refers in Rock Edict XIII. It is the country called Āṭavī or Āṭavya. In regard to it he says: "If any one does him wrong, the Beloved of the gods must bear as much as can be borne. [3] And to (the people of) the Forests which are in the dominions of the Beloved of the gods he shows conciliatoriness

1 IA., VIII. 145.

2 *Ibid*, XIII. 367. 8.

3 Compare this with *khamisati ne devanam-piye aphākain ti e chakiye ahmiave*, said by Aśoka with reference to the subjects of the Anta or bordering rulers in Dhauli and Jaugaḍā Separate Edicts (*Ins. A.*, pp. 89-90).

and seeks their cessation (from evil ways). The Beloved of the gods has might though he is repenting. Unto them (therefore) it is said: 'they should express sense of shame, and they shall not be killed'." It appears from this that the Āṭavyas or the people of the Forest Country were not altogether subordinate to Aśoka, but enjoyed some degree of independence. Otherwise there is no meaning in the statement that they have done him wrong, and that although he has might to punish them, he is resorting to the *sāman* or friendly mode of winning them over to his side,—a mode, no doubt, which suggested itself to him on account of his having become an ardent follower of Dhaṁma. Who were these Āṭavyas? In the Purāṇas they are mentioned side by side with Pulindas, Vindhyamūlīyas and Vaidharbhas. And one copper-plate grant describes a Parivrājaka king, Hastin, as master of the Ḍabhālā kingdom together with the Eighteen Forest Kingdoms (Āṭavī-rājya).[1] Ḍabhālā must be the older form of Ḍahālā, the modern Bundelkhaṇḍ. The Āṭavī Country, which comprised no less than eighteen tiny kingdoms in the Gupta period must have extended from Bāghelkhaṇḍ right up almost to the sea-coast of Oṛissā. And this may explain why two copies of his Minor Rock Edicts are at Rūpnāth and

[1] GI., p, 114.

Sahasrām, which were on the eastern and western frontiers of the Aṭavī country. In the Detatched Rock Edicts of Dhauli and Jaugaḍā, Aśoka exhorts his officials to announce his policy of sympathy and love to the people of the bordering territory. In Oṛissā there could be no kingdom adjoining to Aśoka's empire except the independent or quasi-independent country of Aṭavī.

We thus obtain a fairly accurate idea of the extent of Aśoka's dominions. They included the whole of India except the southern extremity of the peninsula held by the Choḍa, Pāṇḍya, Sātiyaputra and Keralaputra kings. This southern boundary is marked roughly by a line drawn from Pulicat near Madras in the east, to Chitaldrug in the north where the three copies of Aśoka's Minor Rock Edicts have been discovered right up to the northern point of the South Canara District on the west.

Let us now see what Greek princes have been mentioned by Aśoka as his contemporaries, and try to identify them. They have all been named in Rock Edict XIII. Of course, Aṁtiyoka is the first to be named as he was a neighbour of Aśoka. Beyond him, we are told, were ruling the four princes Turamayā, Aṁtekina or Aṁtikini, Maga and Alikasu(ṁ)dra. Aṁtiyoka, is, of course, Antiochus II. Theos (B.C. 261-246), king of Syria, and Turamāya, Ptolemy II. Philadelphos of

Egypt (285-247). Aṁtekina or Aṁtikini, as Bühler has remarked, corresponds to the Greek Antigenes rather than to Antigonus.[1] But as no king named Antigenes is known, Aṁtekini has been identified with Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia (276-239). Maga is obviously Magas of Cyrene (c. 300-c. 250), but there is some doubt about Alikasuṁdara, who, according to some, was Alexander of Epirus (272-c. 255), and, according to others, Alexander of Corinth (252-c. 244).[2] In Rock Edict II. Antiochus alone is mentioned, and the other princes referred to as his *sāmantas* or bordering kings. There can be no doubt that of these Greek princes Antiochus alone had his dominions conterminous with those of Aśoka. And we also know that there had been friendly relations and dispatch of embassies between the Seleukidan and Mauryan Houses since the time of Chandragupta. But was Aśoka in any way an ally of the other Helenic kings? Did he enter into any diplomatic intercourse with those powers? The distance which separated them from the dominions of Aśoka must have been enormous, and, *primâ facie*, it does not appear probable that there was any political intercourse between India and Hellenic kingdoms beyond Syria. But so far as Rock Edict XIII. is concerned, it clearly implies that he was in the

[1] ZDMG., XL. 137.
[2] JRAS., 1914, 945.

habit of sending *dūtas* or envoys to the courts of these Greek rulers. And, as a matter of fact, we know that Ptolemy Philadelphos, Aśoka's contemporary, dispatched an envoy called Dionysios to the Mauryan court.

The reference by Aśoka to his contemporary Greek rulers has been made the basis of a calculation for arriving at his date more accurately. But our calculation, in the first place, must rely upon the regnal years to which the edicts referring to or mentioning the Hellenic potentates must be assigned. We have seen that these records are Rock Edicts II, and XIII. But to what regnal years can they be presumed to belong? M. Senart is of opinion that the whole set of Rock Edicts was engraved in the fourteenth year of Aśoka's reign, and all European scholars have endorsed this view. But one young Bengali scholar has questioned its reasonableness, and has adduced reasons, which appear to be cogent, to show that at least Rock Edicts II, and XIII. could not have been promulgated prior to the twenty-seventh regnal year.[1] Supposing that both these Rock Edicts were issued

[1] *Aśoka's Dhammalipis* by Harit Krishna Deb, M.A. His main contention is as follows. Pillar Edict VII, is dated in the 27th year and is admitted by all to be a resumê of the multifarious measures which Aśoka adopted up till that year for the dissemination of his Dhamma. The carrying out of philanthropic works (RE. II.) and the propagation of Dhamma (RE. XIII.) in the realms of the Greek rulers are such important things that Aśoka would most certainly have made

in the twenty-eighth year, the date must correspond to a year when the five Greek rulers were alive. If Alikasuṁdara of Rock Edict XIII, is Alexander of Epirus, this year would fall between 272 and 255, but if Alexander of Corinth is intended, then between 252 and 250. The latter supposition is more probable.[1] So that we may take it that the twenty-eighth regnal year of Aśoka corresponds to 251 B. C. If this calculation is correct, Aśoka probably ascended the throne circa 279 B. C. Whatever the actual result of such a calculation may be, it is based upon two things, namely, the date of Rock Edicts III, and XIII, and the identification of the Alikasuṁdara of the latter edict. And as these are factors of more or less uncertain character, we cannot possibly arrive at the date of Aśoka's accession to the throne with any accuracy.

We have thus obtained a fairly good idea of the extent of Aśoka's dominions. We will now try and see how they were administered. What the system of the Mauryan administration was in general we know from Kauṭilya's Artha-śāstra and also from the account left to us by Megasthenes. But our object here is to see what

mention of them in Pillar Edict VII, if he had heard, when it was engraved, that they had met with some measure of success in those foreign countries. The omission is significant, and shows that Rock Edicts II, and XIII, could not have been promulgated prior to Pillar Edict VII., that is, the 27th regnal year.

[1] JRAS., 1914, p. 945.

the Aśoka inscriptions themselves have to teach us about this matter. This will not be a superfluous inquiry, and is sure to throw light upon new points, not known previously.

That Aśoka had a vast empire cannot be doubted. That such an extensive empire cannot be successfully wielded by one single individual can also be admitted. The empire must therefore have been split up into a number of viceroyalties, corresponding to the *subahs* of the Mughal period. And the Aśoka inscriptions clearly prove that the system of provincial government existed under his rule. But the provincial governors appear to have been of two classes in his time as also in the later imperial Gupta period. The provinces which were of political importance and which therefore required loyal and tactful administration were assigned to the princes of the royal blood designated Kumāras. Four such Kumāra viceroyalties are referred to in the edicts. One Kumāra was stationed at Takshaśilā, the head-quarters of Gandhārà, which being a frontier province required a careful and trustworthy administrator. A second Kumāra was posted at Suvarṇagiri, which has not yet been satisfactorily located.[1] There can however be no doubt that it was also the capital of the southernmost and therefore frontier

[1] Can it be Kanakgiri in the Raichur District, Nizam's Dominions, as proposed by Prof. Krishnaswami Aiyangar ?

province touching the independent dominions of the Chola, Pāṇḍya and Keralaputra kings. A third Kumāra was in charge of Kaliṅga, with his head-quarters at Tosalī, no doubt, Dhauli, where one set of Rock Edicts was found. Just because it was a newly conquered province, it stood in necessity of being entrusted to a faithful and vigilant ruler and must therefore have been converted into a Kumāra viceroyalty. There was a fourth province which was also held by a Kumāra. This was the province with its capital at Ujjain. It was neither a frontier nor a newly conquered province, but still it must have possessed sufficient political importance to be administered by a prince of the royal blood. But these could not have exhausted the list of the provincial governors in Aśoka's time. Just as some provinces were ruled over by Kumāras, there must have been others which were governed by persons not related to the royal family. It is true that no instance of such a provincial governor is known from Aśoka inscriptions, but one such instance has been supplied by the celebrated Junāgaḍh inscription of Rudradāman. This epigraphic record tells us that the province of Surāshṭra or Kāṭhiāwāṛ was governed by Vaiśya Pushyagupta in Chandragupta's time and by the Yavana king Tushāspa when Aśoka was king.[1] How a chief,

[1] EI. VIII. 43 & 46-7.

and, above all, a Yavana ruler can be a provincial governor need not surprise us. The case is not at all unlike that of Rājā Mān Singh, Chief of Amer, appointed by Akbar to govern the province of Bengal. In the Gupta period also we know that some of the provincial governors have been designated Mahārājas.[1]

The Dāmodarpur copper plate inscriptions[2] give us clearly to understand that in the Gupta period each province called *bhukti* comprised more than one *vishaya* or district, and that whereas the governor of the province was appointed by the king, the ruler of the *vishaya* was appointed not by the latter but by the former. What terms were used to denote the territorial division and its subdivisions in Aśoka's time we do not know, but it appears that the head of the district was appointed not by the king but by the head of the province. This seems clear from the Śiddāpur copies of the Minor Rock Edicts. Here Aśoka addresses himself to the Mahāmātras of Isila, not directly but through the Āryaputra or Kumāra and his Mahāmātras who were in charge of the Deccan province with Suvarṇagiri as its capital. This means that the Suvarṇagiri province consisted of more than one district and that Isila was the head-quarters of one of these districts in which

[1] *Ibid.*, XV. 136 & 138.

[2] *Ibid.*, 127 & ff.

no doubt, the Śiddāpur Edicts were situated. And further, as Aśoka's orders are here issued to the Mahāmātras of Isila through the Prince Royal in council, and not directly as, for instance, in the case of the Mahāmātras of Kauśāmbī and Sārnāth, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the provincial governors, at any rate, those who were Kumāras, had the privilege of appointing their own district officials, as no doubt was the practice during the Gupta rule. The same appears to be the case with Samāpā, a district town of the newly subjugated territory of Kaliṅga. In the Jaugaḍā Separate Edict, the king is not giving orders direct to the Mahāmātras of Samāpā, but says that they might be communicated to them, apparently, by the Kumāra in council stationed at Tosalī.

Whether the Kumāra exercised full autonomy in the province he was set to govern is doubtful. It seems that he was not invested with complete and unchecked authority. This is pretty certain from the fact that wherever Aśoka addresses himself to the local provincial government, he speaks not to Kumāra simply, but to Kumāra and his Mahāmātras jointly, as in the Dhauli and Jaugaḍā Separate Edict II. Similarly, when the local government has to issue orders to district officials under its jurisdiction, it is not the Kumāra or Āryaputra by himself that does so, but rather the Āryaputra and his Mahāmātras,

as may be clearly seen from the Śiddāpur Edicts. This is but natural, for if the power of a prince is left entirely uncontrolled in a province, there is every danger of his setting himself up as an independent ruler. Thus the local princely rule in Aśoka's time was really represented by Kumāra in council.

In Rock Edict III. Aśoka specifies three classes of officials, namely, Prādeśikas, Rājukas, and Yuktas. Dr. F. W. Thomas was the first to draw our attention to the word *yukta* occurring in this sense in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra.[1] But he takes it to mean a subordinate official in general, though Kauṭilya enables us to understand more precisely which class of officials the Yuktas denoted. Kauṭilya speaks of both the Yuktas and their Assistants the Upayuktas. Their duties, however, were of the same kind and are described in two conse utive chapters, a careful reading of which leaves no doubt as to their being principally district officers who managed king's property, received and kept account of the revenue, and had power to spend where expense was likely to lead to an increase of revenue. The verse quoted about the Yuktas by Dr. Thomas from the Mānava-dharmaśāstra confirms this idea. For Manu says that lost property, when recovered, should remain in the charge of the Yuktas. These officers were

[1] JRAS., 1909, 466-7; 1914, 387-91.

therefore in charge of the receipts of all revenue and property of the king. Curiously enough, the designations Yukta and Upayukta survived to a late period. Thus in a grant of the Rāshṭrakūṭa king, Govinda IV., dated Śaka 853 (=A.D. 930), mention is made of Yuktaka and Upayuktaka along with the officers, Rāshṭrapati, Grāmakūṭa, and Mahattara. [1] Instead of Yukta and Upayukta we sometimes have Āyukta and Viniyukta. Thus Āyuktas are mentioned in the Allāhabād Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta as "restoring the wealth of the various kings, conquered by the strength of his arms".[2] An Āyukta is mentioned also as a Vishaya-pati or Head of a District in a copper-plate grant of Budhagupta.[3]

As regards the Prādeśika Dr. Thomas seems to be right in identifying him with the officer Pradeshṭri mentioned in the Arthaśāstra. He has culled several passages from this work which go clearly to show that Pradeshṭri was an officer "charged with executive duties of revenue collection and police."[4] But this is not all, for he has been in two places called Dharmastha, which indicates that he also discharged the function of a judge. And, further, as he has been

[1] EI., VII. 39-40.
[2] CII., III. 14.
[3] EI., XV. 138.
[4] JRAS., 1914, 383 & ff.; 1915, 112.

mentioned side by side with Amātya or Councillor, Pradeshṭri was an officer of a high grade. This agrees with the fact, mentioned in the chapter of Arthaśāstra [1] dealing with the pays and emoluments of state officials, that a Pradeshṭri has to be allotted a much higher salary than any Adhyaksha or Superintendent.

Who the Rājūkas were has been partly explained by Bühler.[2] From quotations in the Kurudhamma-jātaka he has shown that Rājūka corresponds to Rajjuka or Rajjugrāhaka as he is therein more fully called. His duty, as described in the Jātaka, seems to have been that of measuring land by means of a cord (*rajju*) and fixing its boundaries. As he is styled *amachcha*, he was a big officer like Pradeshṭri, corresponding perhaps to the modern Settlement Officer, as Bühler says. That he was an officer of a very high grade is also shown by the fact that Aśoka speaks of having appointed Rajjukas over hundreds thousands of men. In his time the Rajjuka was in charge of *vyavahāra* and *daṇḍa*, that is, he was a judge who could *give awards and punishments*. Now, Strabo refers to a class of magistrates, who have the care of the rivers, measure the land as in Egypt, and "*have the power of rewarding or punishing those*

[1] P. 245.

[2] ZDMG., XLVII, 466 & ff.; Fick's *Social Organisations, etc.* (trans), 148-9.

who merit either." [1] It is quite possible that here Strabo has the Rajjukas in view and that the Rajjukas therefore combined the functions of both the Judge and the Settlement Officer.

There is yet another officer whom we have to note in this connection. He is mentioned as *Nagala-viyohālaka* (Nagara-vyavahāraka) in Separate Kalinga Edict I. He is doubtless the same as Paura-vyāvahārika referred to in the Arthaśāstra,[2] and appears to have been a judge for district towns only. So far as the salary assigned to him goes, he was of the same status as Kumāra and certainly of higher rank than even a Pradeshṭri or Prādeśika.

There are two or three other classes of officials mentioned in the Aśoka inscriptions. They are all referred to at the end of Rock Edict XII. They are Dhaṁma-Mahāmāta, Ithijhakha-Mahāmāta and Vrachabhūmika. Who the Dhaṁma-Mahāmātas were we shall see shortly. Ithijhakha-Mahāmātas are the same as Stryadhyaksha-Mahāmātras, that is, the Mahāmātras who were Superintendents (*adhyakshas*) of women. This Officer is unknown to Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, but it is not difficult to surmise what his function was. Anybody who

[1] Attention to this was first drawn by Dr. Hemchandra Ray-Chaudhuri, in his *Political History of Ancient India from the accession of Parikshit to the extinction of the Gupta Dynasty.*

[2] Pp. 20 & 245.

has studied the Arthaśāstra knows full well what different and complicated questions connected with woman such as her maintenance, transgressions, elopement and so forth have been discussed under the section 'Dharmasthīya'. The state also recognised its duty of providing subsistence to helpless women when they were carrying and also to children they might give birth to. It is quite conceivable that there was appointed an officer specially for this purpose who was called Stryadhyaksha. It is, however, somewhat difficult to understand who the Vachabhūmikas were. The first part of this designation has been taken as equivalent to *vraja*, mentioned thrice in the Arthaśāstra in the sense of "herds of cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, asses, camels, horses and mules", which was a source of revenue to the state; and one chapter from this even speaks of Godhyaksha or Superintendent of Cattle who maintained the king's *vrajas*, carried on cattle rearing, ran the dairy work of the Royal Household.[1] The Vrajabhūmikas were probably officials connected with the cattle herds, whether belonging to the king or private individuals, and also whether bringing produce to the royal establishment or money into the treasury.

There now remains only one officer for us to note here. He is designated Aṁta-Mahāmāta, that is, Anta-Mahāmātra. This phrase has been

[1] P. 60 and p. 128 & ff.

taken to mean "High Officers of the Frontiers", "Wardens of the Marches". They have been mentioned in Pillar Edict I. There Aśoka seems to imply that just as his officials of whatever rank are inducing the fickle-minded people in his territory to follow Dhaṁma, the Anta-Mahāmātras are attaining the same object apparently outside. This indicates that these latter officials were not in charge of the frontier provinces of Aśoka's empire but rather those sent to the neighbouring states and charged with the carrying out of Aśoka's programme of Dhaṁma. This agrees with the fact that in the same edict he distinguishes Anta-Mahāmātras from Purushas or officers of his dominions. It further agrees with the fact that in Aśoka inscriptions whereever the word *aṁta* occurs, it has the sense of either "a bordering king" or "people of a bordering kingdom".

It will be seen that the last four classes of officials, though their functions are so diverse, have all been designated Mahāmātras. The term *mahāmātra* must therefore be understood to mean 'a high official' or 'dignitary' only.[1] This is also clear from the fact that in the Dhauli and Jaugaḍā Separate Edict I., Nagaravyāvahārikas also have been called Mahāmātras. There is also another general term which we find used in Aśoka inscriptions. It is the word

[1] JRAS., 1914, 386-7.

purusha, which is a still more generic designation, and denoted officials of whatever description. This is evident from the fact that in Pillar Edict I., Aśoka divides his *purushas* into three classes, according as they are of the high, middle, and low rank.

Now, the question arises: "How was the king connected with these Mahāmātras?" Aśoka had a very wide empire, and the number of the Mahāmātras appointed must have been a big one. How could one single king be in direct touch with these officials? Do the inscriptions speak of any intermediate body which was in close touch with the king on the one hand, and with the officials on the other? This body is the Parishad, which is mentioned in two edicts. This is evidently the Mantri-parishad of the Arthaśāstra. They were the council of ministers, whose duty, as Kauṭilya tells us,[1] was to start the work that was not begun, to complete what was begun, to improve what was accomplished, and enforce strict obedience to orders. Another important duty of theirs was to dispose of work in conjunction with the officers that were near and advise those that were far off, through official communication. And when any emergent work arose, the king was to call not only his counsellors but also the assembly of ministers, to do what the

[1] *Arthaśāstra*, p. 29.

majority of the members suggested, or whatever course of action, leading to success, they pointed out. This is what Kauṭilya says, and it agrees with what has been stated about the Parishad in the edicts. Thus in Rock Edict III., Aśoka specifies 'small expense' (*apavyayatā*), and 'small accumulation' (*apabhāṇḍatā*) as two of the practices constituting Dhaṁma, and apparently entrusts to the Yukta officers the work of fostering these virtues among his people. But as no two households can agree in regard to the necessaries of life, no hard and fast rule can be laid down for all households in regard to the amount they ought to accumulate or expend. And Aśoka therefore orders the Parishad to advise and help the Yuktas to execute his order in this respect so that the spirit of it was carried out. This shows in the first place that the Parishad is to see that every order of the king is put into execution and secondly that it was a body which dominated and guided the action of the officials, as the Arthaśāstra tells us. Another function of the Parishad detailed in this work, that is, in respect of the emergent work cropping up, is also emphasised by Rock Edict VI. which is an administrative edict. There Aśoka says: "And when in respect of anything that I personally order by word of mouth, for being issued or proclaimed, or again in respect of any emergent work superimposing itself upon the Mahāmātras, there is any division

or rejection in the Parishad, I have commanded that it should forthwith be reported to me at all places and at all hours". What he means is that when he issues an oral order or when any pressing matter devolves upon a Mahāmātra, the Parishad has to meet and discuss it. If they come to a unanimous decision, no question can arise as to its being carried out. But if there is a divergence of opinion or even unanimous opposition and the matter is shelved for the time being, it is for the king to see what this difference or opposition is and find out which of their counsels is most likely to be efficacious. But he must have the benefit of the views of the Parishad before he can take action, and in order that no delay may occur in the matter of his taking action, he commands the Prativedakas to report to him as soon as the views of the council are formed, whatever the hour when and whatever the place where he may be. The Parishad was thus like a modern Secretariat which was an intermediate administrative body between the king and the Mahāmātras, and it appears that whereas, on the one hand, it had the power to scrutinise the king's orders before they were executed so that he might re-consider them, it could, on the other hand, advise any Mahāmātra in regard to any emergent matter without reference to the king provided its members were at one with the Mahāmātra. But if any division arose between

them, or even unanimous decision was reached, but contrary to that of the king or the Mahāmātra, the whole case was to be forwarded to the king as he was the final arbiter.

One interesting point to be noticed in connection with the administrative system of Aśoka is that some of his officers had to undertake tours for the dispatch of their business. They were generally known as Vivutha or Vyuṭha, the Sanskrit equivalent of which was Vyushṭa. This is clear from the Sārnāth Edict where the local Mahāmātras have been instructed to go out on tour so far as their jurisdiction went. The same instruction has been issued in the Rūpnāth Edict, but, in this case, to the Vyushṭa officers. In Pillar Edict VII. these Vyushṭas have been called Purushas or officials, and as they are also spoken of there as being set over a multitude of people, they appear to have occupied a high rank. And, as a matter of fact, the Prādeśikas, Rajjukas and Yuktas have been mentioned in Rock Edict III. as going out on tour for their routine work, and, we know that they were dignitaries of a high class. The touring Mahāmātras or officials were expected to return to the district head-quarters by turns on the Uposatha or fast days, as may be inferred from the Sārnāth Edict. But they had all to be present at the head-quarters on the day of the *Tishya nakshatra*—that is the king's

birth-day,[1] as we may see from the Dhauli and Jaugaḍā Separate Edict I.

Let us now see what Aśoka was as a ruler. To begin with, it is interesting to note with what feelings he looked upon his subjects. He gives us an insight into his mind by what he says in the Separate Kaliṅga Edicts. "All men", says he therein, "are my children; and, just as I desire for my children that they may obtain every kind of welfare and happiness both in this and the next world, so do I desire for all men". Aśoka evidently had a paternal conception of the king's duty, pointing clearly to the royal absolutism of the Mauryan period.[2] Just as children are solely dependent upon their parents who can do to them just what they like, the subjects were at the mercy of the king who was thus no better than a despot. This presents a strong contrast to the notion, that was prevalent before the rise of the Mauryan power and according to which the king was considered to be a mere servant of the state and was allowed to levy the prescribed taxes in order that he might receive the wage due to him for his services.

As regards the reforms he introduced in his government, one thing to which Aśoka paid

[1] Above, p. 11.

[2] This agrees also with the spirit of Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, where in at least two places (pp. 47 and 208) the relation of the king to his subjects is described as that of the father to his children, as has been pointed out in the *Calcutta Review*, 1922, p. 393.

special attention and to which he was particularly sensitive was the administration of justice. No wonder if he kept a watchful eye when the newly conquered territory of Kaliṅga was formed into a province of his empire and was consigned for government to a Kumāra in council. In Separate Edict I. found at both Dhauli and Jaugaḍā, he takes Nagara-vyāvahārikas severely to task, because some people of the district towns of Tosalī and Samāpā were subjected to arbitrary imprisonment or harassed without any cause. He plainly gives them to understand that they have not fully grasped the meaning of his words when he said that all men were his children and that he desired for them as for the latter both material and spiritual happiness. When his expostulations are over, he gives them a healthy piece of advice. Earnestly and fervently he directs them to studiously guard themselves against "envy, lack of perseverance, harshness, impatience, neglect of repeated effort, idleness, and sense of weariness", and develop in themselves "perseverance and patience". He presses on their attention the fact that unless they performed their duties sedulously, they would neither gain heaven nor discharge their debt to the king. Still fearing that notwithstanding all these remonstrances the condition of things might not improve and that arbitrary imprisonment and causeless

harassment might continue, he threatens them with sending forth a Mahāmātra every five years to see that all his injunctions for the proper administration of justice are carried out. Thinking that in other provinces also it was not prudent to wait for similar maladministration to take place in order to remedy it, he issues orders to the princes stationed at Takshaśilā and Ujjain to dispatch similar Mahāmātras on tour with the same object in view in the provinces of their jurisdiction.

The question arises: who were these Mahāmātras that were commissioned to detect cases of arbitrary imprisonment or harassment in the districts? One point to note about them is that they have been instructed to attend to this new duty without neglecting their routine work. And it seems almost certain that they were the Dharma-Mahāmātras for the first time mentioned in Rock Edict V. In this edict Aśoka tells us that he was the first to create this class of officials and specifies their duties. As the Dhaṁma of Aśoka was directed towards the generation and development of not only the earthly but also the spiritual good of the people, the duties of the Dharma-Mahāmātras also fell under these two heads. In what manner Aśoka instructed them to cause and promote the spiritual good of his people we will see when we come to discuss Aśoka's achievements as a missionary.

Here, of course, we are concerned with their duties in so far as they relate to the material good. And one of the duties they had to discharge in this connection was to inspect those who were put into prison and to make money grants if any one of them was encumbered with a big family, to free him from shackles if he was oppressed, and even to release him if he was very aged. This clearly shows in the first place that supervision, by a touring Mahāmātra, of the administration of justice in the provincial towns, which Aśoka says in the Separate Kaliṅga Edicts that he is going to enforce, has actually been assigned to the Dharma-Mahāmātras. What is worthy of note is that they have been authorised not only to set right the violation of justice by freeing a person from fetters who may have been subjected to oppression but also to temper justice with mercy by making money grants for the maintenance of a culprit's family if it is in a helpless condition or even by releasing him if he is stricken with years and not fit to be confined in a dungeon. They had also a humanitarian function to discharge in that part of Aśoka's empire, however, which consisted of the countries of the Yavanas, Kaṁbojas, Gandhāras, Rāshṭrikas and other Aparāntas. They were to look to the welfare and happiness of such among the Brāhmaṇ and Gṛihapati classes

as had been reduced to the servile condition and to occupy themselves with the helpless and the aged in general. The idea of the state providing the helpless and the aged with maintenance is not a new one, and was known even before the time of Aśoka. Thus Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra says:[1] "The king shall maintain the orphan, the aged, the infirm, the afflicted and the helpless". It is possible that this duty of the state up to Aśoka's time was observed more in the breach, and in order to renew the practice and ensure its continuance, Aśoka entrusted it to the Dharma-Mahāmātras, who were created by him. And even if we waive for the moment this humanitarian work as being not Aśoka's own original, it was no insignificant thing that he aimed at when he attempted to restore and ensure justice where it was set at naught and soften it with clemency where it was likely to hit severely. This is one sidelight into Aśoka as a ruler.

The appointment of the Dharma-Mahāmātras was Aśoka's own creation, and he appointed them for the first time in the thirteenth year of his reign as he tells us in Rock Edict V. About this time he seems to have introduced another administrative reform. This has been described in the edict following it, and relates to the prompt

[1] P. 47.

dispatch of business. Accessibility to the subjects is looked upon as a paramount virtue with a ruler in the oriental countries, and especially so in ancient India. But it is perhaps impossible to surpass Aśoka in the degree to which he seems to have exhibited it. In Rock Edict VI. he notifies his willingness to receive reports at all hours and at all places, whether he is taking his meals or is in the ladies' apartments, his inner chamber, in the mews, on horseback, or in pleasaunces. It is in this connection that he speaks of the Prativedakas or Reporters and the deliberations of Parishad to which we have adverted above. The earnestness and fervour with which he made himself accessible are clearly and indelibly depicted in the words he has used. "I am never satisfied," says he, "with (my) exertion or with (my) dispatch of business. The welfare of the whole world is an esteemed duty with me. And the root of that, again, is this, namely, exertion and dispatch of business. There is no higher work than the welfare of the whole world. And what little effort I make is for the purpose that I may be free from debt to the living creatures, that I may render some (of them) happy here and that they may gain heaven in the next world. For this purpose have I caused this document of Dhaṁma to be engraved, in order that it may endure for a long time and that my sons and grandsons may similarly exert

themselves for the welfare of the whole world. This, however, is difficult to carry out without the utmost exertion ".

For about thirteen years Aśoka does not seem to have adopted any important measure connected with his administrative system. In the twenty-sixth year of his reign, however, he took an important step for further ameliorating the administration of justice, especially so far as the provinces were concerned. Pillar Edict V. informs us that in that year he placed " Rajjukas in sole charge of the judicial investigation and the adjudgment of punishment, in order that they may perform their duties with confidence and without fear, cause welfare and happiness to the people of the provinces, and confer favours (on them) ". The same edict continues by saying that the Rajjukas "shall make themselves acquainted with what gives happiness or pain, and exhort the people of the provinces along with the faithful, so that they may gain happiness in this world and in the next." Evidently the Rajjukas in the twenty-sixth year of his reign had a two-fold duty to perform,—to cause and promote not only the temporal but also the spiritual good of the provincials. How exactly they were expected to fulfil this second object we will see when we treat of " Aśoka as a Missionary". Here we will try to find out by what administrative reform the Rajjukas were expected

to achieve the first object. They were put in sole charge, we are told, of the judicial investigation and the adjudgment of punishment. Two questions may arise here. The first is: "Why were they placed in sole charge of this?" Aśoka gives a reply to this, namely, in order that there may be uniformity in judicial investigation and uniformity in adjudgment of punishment. The second question that now arises is: what did Aśoka mean by 'uniformity' here? This is rather a difficult question to answer. But what he probably meant is this. Rajjukas were not the only officers who were connected with the administration of justice. We have seen above that there were at least two more officers,—the Nagara-vyāvahārika and the Prādeśika (Pradeshtri), who also performed the function of a judge. As there were thus three classes of officials in one and the same district who performed judicial as well as other duties, uniformity in respect of procedure and judgment was not possible. The administration of justice could not consequently be expected to be uniform even so far as the people of one district were concerned. This was a veritable evil, and Aśoka tried to remedy it by handing over to the Rajjukas the sole charge of judicial department and by relieving the other two classes of officials of this jurisdiction. Well could Aśoka therefore say: "Just as a (person) feels confident after making

over his offspring to a clever nurse, saying unto himself: 'the clever nurse desires to bring up my offspring', even so have I appointed the Rajjukas for the welfare and happiness of the provincials, in order that they may perform their duties without fear, with confidence, and without perplexity."[1]

Just in the year when Aśoka effected the above reform in the administration of justice, he made an attempt to mitigate the rigours of the penal code. The same edict, that is, Pillar Edict IV. informs us that he granted a respite of three days to men condemned to the sentence of death. The object of it was to afford them an opportunity to think about, and make themselves fit for, the next world before they were executed.

[1] It appears from this passage that the Rajjukas were made supreme in the execution of the judicial function and that Aśoka abolished all appeals to higher authorities. It looks that the revision of justice by the Dhaṁma-Mahāmātras was abrogated by the king in the twenty-sixth year when its administration was consigned solely to the Rajjukas.

CHAPTER III

Aśoka as a Buddhist

The main object which Aśoka had set before himself and for the realisation of which he strained every nerve was the propagation of Dhaṁma. There is hardly any epigraphic record of his—which does not speak of this Dhaṁma or is not in one way or another connected with it. His Rock and Pillar Edicts are designated *Dhaṁma-lipis*, that is, documents relating to Dhaṁma. What Aśoka exactly understood by Dhaṁma we will see in the next chapter. Here we will consider what religion he professed and in what relation to it he stood.

It is scarcely necessary to state that Aśoka was a follower of Buddhism. All Buddhist records tell us that he has espoused that religion. On the other hand, there is no work, literary or scriptural, which says that he had embraced any other faith. But what do his inscriptions teach us? This is the only and real question we have to answer. When the inscriptions of Aśoka began to be studied and only a few were known, H. H. Wilson ventured

to dispute his Buddhist faith, and Edward Thomas held that Aśoka was a Jaina at first but became a Buddhist afterwards.[1] But it is no longer permissible to call in question the Buddhist faith of Aśoka. That is now established beyond all doubt by the Bhābru edict, otherwise called the Second Bairāṭ Edict. It opens with Aśoka expressing his reverence for Buddha, Dhaṁma, and Saṁgha, exactly in the well-known trinitary formula of Buddhism. There are other records too, which point to the same conclusion. The views of Wilson and Thomas were based upon unreliable readings and inaccurate interpretations, and are no longer countenanced by any scholars. The question regarding which discrepancy is now possible is: when did Aśoka become a follower of Buddhism? The scholar who considered this question last was the late Dr. J. F. Fleet. He held that the Dhaṁma inculcated in the rock and pillar edicts was in no way the Buddhist Dhaṁma, because in them Buddha is not mentioned at all, and the Saṁgha only once and in such a way as to place it on a par with other creeds. The object of these edicts, says Dr. Fleet, was thus "not to propagate Buddhism or any other particular religion, but to proclaim the determination of Aśoka to govern his kingdom righteously and kindly in accordance with the

[1] JRAS. (NS.), Vol. IX, pp. 155 and 187.

duty of pious kings."[1] In other words, the term *dhaṁma* used in the rock and pillar Edicts Fleet takes as the 'ordinary *dharma* of kings, which is laid down in the Mānava-dharmaśāstra, I. 114, as one of the topics of that work.' According to him, Aśoka was converted to Buddhism in the 30th year from his coronation, that is, two years after the pillar edicts were engraved. Evidently, Fleet ignores the fact that the Dhaṁma Aśoka refers to in his rock and pillar edicts is intended for being put into practice, not by himself or his officers, but by his subjects. This Dhaṁma cannot thus possibly be *rāja-dharma*, which represents a code of duties for a king and his officers to perform, and not for his people. The Rummindēī inscription, again, informs us that in the twentieth year of his reign Aśoka visited in person the place where Buddha was born and did worship there. It is evident from this that already in his twentieth regnal year he was a Buddhist. The words of the inscription clearly mean that Aśoka went to Buddha's birthplace in person and performed worship, and not that he did the place the honour of going there in person, as Dr. Fleet has understood it. Again in Rock Edict VIII. Aśoka says that in the tenth year of his reign he repaired to

Saṁbodhi. Whether Saṁbodhi here means 'supreme knowledge' or something like it as scholars take it, or 'the place where Buddha obtained enlightenment' as I understand it, this much is admitted on all hands that it is a word technical to Buddhist scriptures, and cannot possibly be taken as equivalent to the ordinary Sanskrit word *saṁbodha* as proposed by Dr. Fleet. This rock edict thus proves that even in the tenth year of his reign Aśoka was a Buddhist.

There is, however, evidence that Aśoka was converted to Buddhism at least two years earlier. This evidence is supplied by Minor Rock Edict I., copies of which have been found at no less than six different places. He begins this edict by saying: "It was more than two years and a half that I was a lay worshipper, but did not exert myself. It is one year, indeed more than one year, that I have been living with the Saṁgha and have exerted myself." When this edict was, therefore, engraved, he had already been a Buddhist for nearly three years and three-quarters. This edict, again, describes his work as a zealot in such terms that it reminds us of his Rock Edict IV. and a little comparison is enough to convince any one that in both Aśoka gives an account of one and the same thing, namely, his achievements as a missionary. Now, it is worthy of note that Rock Edict IV.

refers itself to the twelfth year of his reign. He therefore must have embraced Buddhism nearly three years and three quarters earlier than this date, that is, in the eighth year. The principal events of this period of Aśoka's life may be thus briefly narrated. He became a Buddhist, as we have just seen, in the eighth regnal year. He was a lay disciple for over two years and a half, but was lukewarm and did little for the propagation of Buddhism. Then he lived with the Saṁgha for over a year, and put forth such missionary activity that at the end of this period, that is, in the twelfth year of his reign, he could say in all good conscience that he achieved the progress of the people in Dhaṁma, such as never happened before.

We thus see that Aśoka was converted to the Buddhist faith in the eighth year of his reign. But this was also the year when the Kaliṅga country was subjugated by him. And scholars have thought that the Kaliṅga war was the cause of it. The horrors attendant upon this war, they are of opinion, struck him with such remorse that they turned his thoughts to religion and that he became a follower of Buddhism. This conclusion does not, however, seem to be borne out by his Rock Edict XIII. which alone adverts to his war with Kaliṅga. This epigraphic record, not only gives a vivid picture of the miseries inflicted upon the people

of Kaliṅga but also of the touchingly penitent attitude of the king's mind. It is true that this edict says: "Afterwards *now* (*tato pachhā adhunā*) that Kaliṅga has been conquered, are found, with the Beloved of the gods, a zealous protection, a zealous longing, and a zealous teaching, of Dhaṁma." But this does not mean that he began to long for, protect, and teach Dhaṁma on account of any change in the career of his life wrought by the Kaliṅga war. His remorse for the miseries and horrors of the war and his zealous protection and teaching of Dhaṁma refers not to the time when Kaliṅga was annexed to his dominions, but to the time when Rock Edict XIII. was promulgated. What Aśoka tells us in this edict is, not at all that the atrocities of the war made him grave and contrite and turned his mind to Buddhism, but clearly that he was already a Buddhist and was therefore ashamed of the war and felt a deep longing for Dhaṁma *at the time* when the edict was proclaimed. Of course, the subjugation of Kaliṅga and his conversion to Buddhism were events which both took place in his eighth regnal year, but the first was not the cause of the second. For, if it is supposed for the moment that the Kaliṅga war was the cause of his espousing Buddhism, we have then also to suppose that he was *zealously* carrying on the protection and teaching of Dhaṁma, as

we are told in Rock Edict XIII. immediately after this province was conquered and he became a Buddhist. This does not, however, agree with what Minor Rock Edict I. says of him, namely, that he was not a zealot the first two years and a half that he was a lay follower.

Aśoka tells us, as we have seen, that for more than two years and a half he was a lay worshipper, and then he went to the Saṁgha and lived with it for over a year. But what does he mean by saying that he went to the Saṁgha and lived with it? This has been a great puzzle to the scholars. M. Senart thinks that this refers to the state visit of the king to the Saṁgha, in the midst of which he took his seat and made a public profession of his Buddhist faith, as the Sinhalese chronicle, the Mahāvaṁso, informs us.[1] It was on this occasion that he showed the genuineness of his devotion by making his son and daughter enter the religious order. But this interpretation cannot be accepted, for, as Kern and Bühler have pointed out, Aśoka is here contrasting the period of his being in the Saṁgha with that of his being an *upāsaka*, and the Mahāvaṁso nowhere says that he had ceased to be a lay disciple when he paid the state visit to the Saṁgha.[2]

[1] IA., 1891, pp. 233-4.

[2] Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 114 and n. 5; *E. I.*, Vol. III., p. 141. and n. 5.

These two scholars therefore hold that what he means is that he entered the Saṁgha and thus became a monk. Though the objection they have raised to M. Senart's rendering is a weighty one, the interpretation which they themselves have proposed is by no means free from an equally weighty objection. The most important words used by Aśoka are: *mayā saṁghe upayīte* (*upete*, *upayāte* or *upagate*). The words *upayīte* or its synonyms cannot give the sense of 'entering' or 'joining,' but rather or 'approaching' or 'associating with' (the Saṁgha). Secondly, it is very doubtful whether a man could combine in himself at one and the same time the functions of the monk and the monarch at that early period when no expediency and no secular motive of any kind could induce the Buddhist clergy to slacken the rigour of the rules of their order. V. A. Smith has no doubt adduced an instance of the practices of a Buddhist monk being reconciled by a Chinese emperor with the duties of a sovereign.[1] But that instance is of a foreign king and of a much later period. The only way out of the difficulty is to say that Aśoka had become, not a Bhikshu, but a Bhikshu-gatika. The latter word occurs in the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya-Pitaka,[2] and is taken

[1] Asoka, p. 37.

[2] III, 7, 8: *SBE.*, Vol. XIII., p. 312, n. 1. For this reference I am indebted to my pupil, Mr. Charan Das Chatterji.

by Buddhaghosha in the sense of "a person that dwells in the same *vihāra* with the Bhikshus." A Bhikshu-gatika is here distinguished from a Bhikshu, and if Aśoka is regarded as having become a Bhikshu-gatika and not a Bhikshu, the difficulty of reconciling the duties of the king with those of the monk cannot arise at all. On the other hand, as a Bhikshu-gatika lives in the same *vihāra* with the Bhikshus, he cannot be called an *upāsaka*, who is a householder. Asoka's association and living with the Saṁgha, which the phrase *saṁghe upayīte* signifies, perfectly agrees with the dwelling of a Bhikshu-gatika in the same monastery as the Bhikshus. With what object precisely a man was allowed by early Buddhism to lead the life of a Bhikshu-gatika is not known. But it appears that such a life is suitable exactly to an individual, who, though he is religiously disposed and apathetic to worldly happiness, cannot yet give up the householder's life for private but cogent reasons of his own. To meet such a contingency Buddhism seems to have permitted the life of a Bhikshu-gatika to enable a person to gratify the religious bent of his mind without at the same time his having to renounce the world. That a Bhikshu-gatika, living in a *vihāra* with the Bhikshus, should bear the garb of a monk is not at all unnatural, and, it is, therefore, no wonder that the statue of Aśoka, which the Chinese pilgrim,

I-tsing, saw in the seventh century A. D., represents that monarch as wearing monkish robes.

The beginning of Aśoka's career as a Bhikshu-gatika synchronised with another course of action upon which he launched himself. Rock Edict VIII. says:

"A long period has elapsed during which kings used to go out on tours of pleasure (*vihāra-yātrā*). Here there were chase and similar diversions. Now, king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, repaired to Saṁbodhi (Bodhi Tree) when he had been consecrated ten years. Thus (originated) this religious tour (*Dhaṁma-yātrā*)."

Here Aśoka tells us that up till the tenth year of his reign, he, like the previous kings, used to find his relaxation in tours of pleasure where he indulged in hunting and sports. In that year, however, he gave up the idea of ever going on these pleasure tours, and started religious tours instead. What he actually did in these religious tours and how he was able to foster Dhaṁma not only in himself but also in his subjects we shall see in a future chapter. What we have to note in this place is that in the tenth year of his reign he paid a visit to the Bodhi Tree and that this was his first *Dhaṁma-yātrā* or religious tour. And as this time coincides with that of his becoming a Bhikshu-gatika, it is difficult to avoid the inference that he began his career as

Bhikshu-gatika with a visit to the Bodhi Tree along with a Saṁgha of Bhikshus, and that the various spiritual benefits conferred upon him and also his people induced him to repeat this Dhaṁma-yātrā so that it became a regular fixture with him. The reminiscence of a later Dhaṁma-yātrā or pious tour certainly appears to be preserved in two pillar inscriptions found in the Tarāi region of Nepāl. One of these is engraved on a column found at Rummindeī, and the other at Niglīvā, thirteen miles north-west of the former. The first of these records tells us that in the twentieth year of his reign Aśoka came in person to the locality where the inscribed pillar stands, did worship, and, as that was the place where Buddha, the sage of the Śākya family, was born, he constructed a huge stone wall and set up the pillar there. The inscription further informs us that because the Blessed One was born there, the village of Luṁminī was freed from all religious cess (*bali*) and was required to pay only one-eighth of produce as land revenue (*bhāga*). What the epigraph means is that in his twentieth regnal year Aśoka visited the garden of Lumbinī, where according to Buddhist tradition, Prince Siddhārtha, the founder of Buddhism, was born, and that he did not rest contented with merely performing worship there, but put up a stone enclosure round the birth-spot of

Buddha and erected a column there. But this was not all. Even to this day we know pilgrims have to pay religious cesses at certain holy places, such, for instance, as Dwārkā in Kāṭhiāwār. The village of Lumbinī, just because it was the birthplace of the founder of Buddhism, must have become a sacred place and been visited by all sorts and conditions of Buddhists even before the time of Aśoka; and, further it appears to have been saddled with a cess. Aśoka, being a Buddhist, naturally did not like the idea of his co-religionists being compelled to pay any kind of cess just at that place where the founder of their religion was born, and so abolished it. But that was not the only boon he conferred upon Lumbinī. Every village of ancient India had to pay one-fourth or one-sixth of its produce as revenue to the king in whose dominions it was comprised. The village of Lumbinī, being subject to Aśoka's rule, had to pay some part of its produce as revenue to him. What portion of the produce he was actually receiving we do not know, but certainly it could never be less than one-sixth. And what he did was that he reduced it to one-eighth. The other pillar of Aśoka in the Nepalese Tarāi is at Niglīvā. The inscription on it says that in the fourteenth year of his reign he enlarged the second Stūpa of the Buddha Konāgamana, but that he visited the place itself and did worship

in the twentieth year. It is therefore quite plain that Aśoka undertook his pious tour in Nepāl in his twentieth regnal year. Perhaps one may wonder why Aśoka visited the birth-place of Buddha so late, that is, six years after he became a Buddhist. If Buddha was born in the garden of Lumbinī, as the Buddhist tradition tells us, one is apt to expect Aśoka to go to the Nepalese Tarāi first and perform worship at the spot where the founder of his religion was born. But it is worthy of note that with the Buddhists the most holy is the place where Prince Siddhārtha saw the light, visible, not to the sensuous, but to the spiritual, eye. And this is just the reason why we see that Aśoka's shaking off the indifference of the Upāsaka period and adopting the hard and strenuous life of a Bhikshu-gatika synchronized with his pilgrimage to Saṁbodhi, where the originator of Buddhism became illumined and became Buddha.

We thus see that Aśoka became a convert to Buddhism in the eighth year of his reign, that for over two years and a half he was a lay follower and did not much exert himself for his faith, and that in the tenth year he became a Bhikshu-gatika, which life in no way interfered with his discharge of the duties as king. The beginning of his career as a Bhikshu-gatika he signalised with a pilgrimage to the Bodhi Tree, and he was now so full of extreme solicitude

and unflagging zeal for the propagation of his faith that hardly a year or so had elapsed when he could not help wondering at the amount of work he had been able to accomplish. His work, of course, was the dissemination of Dhaṁma. What the exact nature of this Dhaṁma was we shall see in the next chapter, where also we shall show that it was a code of morals, not, however, such as was merely common to all religions as has been supposed by some scholars, but rather such as have been recommended by Buddhism to the people in general, as no doubt may be inferred from the fact that Aśoka preached it when he was a Buddhist. But in this chapter where we are concerned with Aśoka as a Buddhist we are to take cognisance of those of his edicts only, where he shows himself to be the sectarian.

The first inscription that has to detain us here is the Bhābrū Edict. This is really an epigraph discovered in the ruins of a hill monastery at Bairāṭ in the northern part of the Jaipur State, Rājputānā. It is a missive from Aśoka to the Buddhist Saṁgha, a copy of which must have been inscribed and deposited by him at every monastic establishment of importance, and the Bhābrū Edict appears to be only one such copy at present discovered. The epigraph opens with a declaration of Aśoka's faith in Buddha, Dharma and Saṁgha according to the well-

known Buddhist formula and of his conviction that the utterances of Buddha are gospel truth. No doubt can possibly be entertained in regard to the sectarian character of this record. The object of this missive is to enumerate certain *Dhaṁma-pariyāyas* or canonical texts, which, it was his earnest wish, that they should be listened to and retained in memory not only by monks and nuns but also by the lay people of both the sexes, in order that the Good Dhaṁma might long endure. The texts referred to by Aśoka are as follows :—

1. Vinaya-samukase.

2. Aliya-vasāni = Ariya-vaṁsā (Aṅguttara, II. 27).

3. Anāgata-bhayāni (*ibid.*, III. 103).

4. Muni-gāthā = Muni-sutta (Sutta-nipāta, p. 36).

5. Moneya-sute = Nālaka-sutta (*ibid.*, pp. 131-4).

6. Upatisa-pasina = Rathavinīta-sutta (Majjhima-N., I. 146-51).

7. Lāghulovāda = Rāhulovāda-sutta (*ibid.*, p. 414).

All these texts have been satisfactorily identified except the first. Buddhaghosha, in his *Visuddhimagga*, narrates a beautiful story of a young monk, who, although he ate for three months in the house of his mother, never said,

'I am thy son, and thou art my mother,' showing clearly that to a conscientious monk mother and father are no hindrances.[1] The young monk lived this exemplary life, because he lived up to the courses of conduct preached by Buddha in the Rathavinīta-sutta, the Nālaka, the Tuvaṭṭhaka, and the Mahā-Ariyavaṁsa. The Suttas in which Buddha is represented to have preached to the Bhikshus are many, but as this story lays emphasis on only four, it appears that up till the time of Budhaghosha the four Suttas just referred to were looked upon as of paramount importance to a Buddhist Bhikshu. That the Aliya-vasāni, Moneya-suta and Upatisa-pasina of Aśoka correspond to the Mahā-Ariyavaṁsa, Nālaka-sutta, and Rathavinīta respectively of Budhaghosha's story has now been accepted by most scholars.[2] If three of the four Suttas referred to by Buddhaghosha have been identified with three of the *Dhaṁmapariyāyas* mentioned by Aśoka, it is very strange that the fourth, namely, the Tuvaṭṭaka cannot be recognised in any one of the texts named by Aśoka. From verse 7 of this Sutta, however, it appears that Buddha is here expounding religious practices (*paṭipadā*), precepts (*pātimokkha*), and contemplation (*samādhi*).[3] And the

[1] Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 434-6.

[2] IA., 1912, pp. 37 and ff.; Neumann, *Buddhist Renden*, Vol. I., p. 152.

[3] *Sutta-nipāta*, p. 171; SBE., Vol. X, Pt. II., p. 168.

words *paṭipadā* and *pātimokkha* used here lead to the surmise that in the Tuvaṭṭaka Sutta we have Aśoka's *Vinaya-samukase*, Vinaya *par excellence.*

It will be seen from the above identifications of the Dhaṁma-pariyāyas referred to by Aśoka that sometimes one text was known by more than one title. Thus *Moneya-sute* is but another name for the Sutta which is known also as the *Nālaka-sutta.* This was not, however, the peculiar feature of the canonical texts cited by the king. Several others are known, and have already been pointed out.[1] The mention of these texts by Aśoka, again, does not prove anything against the existenee of the whole body or any part of the Tipiṭaka in his time, for Aśoka is here recommending a few sacred texts only, and what he is here not citing or selecting from cannot be regarded as non-existent in his time.

The scriptural texts selected by Aśoka show what sort of a Buddhist he was. His mind was ravished not by the ritualistic or metaphysical elements of Buddhism, but rather by the fundamentals of that religion, or for the matter of that, any religion. He was fascinated not by any specification of rules and regulations to be observed externally and mechanically, but rather what constitutes and conduces to real inner

[1] IA, 1912, p. 40.

growth. Take for instance the *Ariyavaṁsā*, one of the texts cited by Aśoka. It lays down four courses of conduct for a monk. A monk, says the Sutta, should be (1) content with simple raiment, and (2) with plain food obtained in the proper way, (3) should be satisfied with the humblest habitation, and (4) and should delight in meditation. The text thus tells us in a nutshell how a Bhikshu should be or ought to live. There are two or three other texts, such as Munigāthā and Moneya-sutta which tell us practically the same thing. And there is no sacred text referred to by Aśoka which is connected merely with the externals of a religion, with the mere disciplinary rules of a religious order, the observance of which may make a Bhikshu an outwardly perfect monk but not necessarily an inwardly good man. All the Suttas adduced by the king relate to the elevation of the soul and are applicable not only to the clergy but also to the laity. This is just the reason why he expressly says that his Suttas should be listened to and pondered over not by monks and nuns alone but also by male and female lay-worshippers. Again, in the Suttas selected by Aśoka he is not content with including those which merely depict a higher mode of life or describe the constituents of lofty and sublime character, but he is careful enough to specify also those which are helps and

guides in the path of spiritual elevation. One such Sutta is *anāgata-bhayāni,* which depicts the 'fears and dangers of the future' that may at any moment arise and frustrate the realisation of the goal of a man's religious strivings. It contains a series of admonitions to exercise all energies and lead a heedful and strenuous life in view of the adverse contingencies forthcoming, such as age, disease, famine, war and schism. Aśoka is thus not satisfied with merely adducing a text which describes the highest mode of living but also lays stress on a Sutta which warns a man against the dangers that threaten and tend to prevent the actualisation of this end if he is not always on the alert and watchful. But these dangers after all are of an external nature. It is true that we ought to be constantly on our guard and strive most assiduously to avoid them. Nevertheless, they are dependent on extraneous circumstances over which we have no control. But there are other dangers which are of an inner character and which equally if not more violently threaten the attainment of spiritual elevation. And the king has therefore done a most wise thing in drawing attention to a sacred text, Rāhulovāda Sutta, a discourse where Buddha is represented to have exhorted to one Ambalaṭṭhika Rāhula and expatiated on the supreme necessity of rigorously scrutinizing every act of the body, speech and mind both when and after it is

initiated. A reading and contemplation of the religious texts recommended by Aśoka is sure to be edifying to any earnest soul that strives for a higher and nobler life, to whatever religion or creed he may belong.

The second document of a sectarian character which we have to note here is the *śāsana* or order of Aśoka which we find engraved on pillars at three different places, namely, Sārnāth, Sānchi and Allahābād. The pillars at the former two places are believed to be *in situ*, but that at present existing at Allahābād is rightly regarded as having originally been at Kauśāmbī. Through this *śāsana* Aśoka aims at preserving the unity of the Buddhist church by putting down all attempt at schism. "Whosoever," says he, "breaks up the church, be it monk or nun, shall be clad in white raiment, and compelled to live in what is not a residence (of the clergy). Thus should this order be communicated to the congregation of the monks and the congregation of the nuns." This order has been addressed to the Mahāmātras, as is clear from two of these inscriptions. One of these, again, shows that in one case at least, these Mahāmātras were those stationed at Kauśāmbī. And it is not at all improbable that in other cases too the Mahāmātras addressed were those belonging to the Muffasil Districts, where the old Buddhistic clerical establishments now represented by the remains at Sārnāth and

Sānchi were originally situated. The prevention of schisms in the Buddhist Church was of extreme importance. It was not therefore enough that orders in that connection should merely be issued to the Mahāmātras of the districts. He therefore further says as follows in the same edict: "One such document has been put up in the place of assembly (*saṁsaraṇa*) in order that it may be accessible to you. And put up just another document so as to be accessible to the laity. And the laity should come every fast day and assure themselves of that same order. And certainly on all fast days as each Mahāmātra comes in his turn (to the head-quarters) for the fast day, he should assure himself of that same order and understand it. And so far as your jurisdiction goes, you must set out on tour with this word (of my command). So too in all fortified towns and (their) districts you must cause others to go out on tour with this word (of my command)."

The contents of this edict are enough to convince anybody that Aśoka was bent upon eradicating all apostasy and division in the Buddhist Church. To gain his end he resorts to a three-fold method. He of course issues the order that he who tries to create a schism shall be vested in white garments, that is, shall be dispossessed of his yellow robes—the monkish garb, and shall be transported to a place where

monks do not reside. In other words, he is at once cut off from all intercourse with his fraternity. And as Aśoka's order is to be communicated to every Buddhist Saṁgha, that must naturally deter a bellicose monk from obtruding his heretic doctrines on the attention of his brethren. This dispels three-fourths of the danger of schismatics. But the heretic, though ostracised, may gain the ear of the lay people, and with their following create a split in the community. Aśoka is alive to this danger, and has therefore instructed the Mahāmātras to post a copy of his order on this subject so as to be accessible to the laity. Where exactly this order was to be put up for their knowledge we are not told. But it is not unlikely that it was intended to be posted in the town hall (*nigama-sabhā*) of which we hear so much both in inscriptions and literature.[1]

The Sārnāth-Kosāmbī-Sāñchī edict leaves no doubt as to the firm determination of Aśoka to put down all attempt at creating a schism in the Buddhist Church. The earnest, almost severe, tone of the edict and the fact that copies of it are found at places of important Buddhist monastic establishments presuppose that in his time the Buddhist Church was at least threatened with disruption, to prevent which he was straining every nerve. But were there, as

[1] *Ibid*, 1919, p. 82.

matter of fact, any divisions of the Buddhist Saṁgha obtaining in Aśoka's time? The edict was no doubt intended to arrest disruption, but that does not preclude us, it may be contended, from supposing that the Saṁgha had already broken up into a number of sections, and Aśoka's endeavour was directed against further division. The Buddhist tradition, preserved in the Singhalese chronicles, which says that a Buddhist council was held at Pāṭaliputra eighteen years after Aśoka's coronation, also says that at that time the Saṁgha was split up into the two main divisions: (1) Theravāda and (2) Mahāsaṁghika, and that the first division had branched off into two and the second into four sections.[1] If we accept this tradition, we have to suppose that already in Aśoka's time there were not only divisions but also subdivisions in the Buddhist Church. What could then be the meaning of the edict which aimed at preventing schism? Are we to suppose that Aśoka intended to nip schism, not in the Buddhist Church as a whole, but rather in that division or subdivision of it, to which he individually belonged? Of course, it is quite possible to contend that in this edict by Saṁgha Aśoka means only that sect of Buddhism of which he was a member. But if we once countenance this view, we are compelled

[1] Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 110-1.

to hold that wherever Aśoka uses the word *saṁgha* he means by it that section of the Buddhist Church to which he pertained. This conclusion cannot, however, commend itself to us. For in Pillar Edict VII. where Aśoka speaks of the Dharma-Mahāmātras, he speaks of the Saṁgha side by side with the Ājīvikas and the Nirgranthas. And are we to suppose here that whereas these Dharma-Mahāmātras were to look to the welfare and progress of the Ājīvikas and Nirgranthas without distinction of creed and division, in the case of the Buddhists only they were to confine their activities not to the Buddhist Church as a whole, but to that division of it of which the king was a follower, all the other divisions or subdivisions of the Saṁgha being consigned to neglect and indifference? Similarly, in the Bhābrū Edict, he refers, as we have seen, to certain scriptural texts which he recommends for rehearsal to the Saṁgha. These texts are so free from sectarian elements that they will bear recital even to those monks who are not Buddhists. And are we to suppose that in the case of the Buddhists alone they are to be recited not to the Buddhist monks and nuns in general but to those only who belonged to Aśoka's denomination? If we are not to land ourselves on such absurdities, it seems desirable to hold that in Aśoka's time the Buddhist Church was not divided and that wherever he

uses the word *saṁgha*, he means the whole undivided Church. What then becomes of the Buddhist tradition? Scholars who have investigated these traditions about the Buddhist councils have lighted upon such downright absurdities and inconsistencies and detected so much of dogmatical and sectarian tendency that very little that is contained in these traditions may be accepted as historical truth.[1] Thus the Council of Pāṭaliputra is not looked upon as any general council at all but a party meeting, and the Second General Council which was held at Vaiśālī came off in all probability not one century after Buddha but in the time of Aśoka, who is the real Kālāśoka of the tradition, that is, Black Aśoka, as he is painted to be before his conversion to Buddhism.[2] This inference is more in consonance with his edicts. For, at the time of the Second General Council, the Buddhist Church was still undivided, though it was threatened with a schism on account of the Ten Points about discipline raised by the Vṛijan monks.[3] The latter were defeated, and the split of the Saṁgha for the time averted. The epigraphic records of Aśoka, too, as we have just seen, point to the inference that by *saṁgha*

[1] *Ibid*, p. 110, which contains the late Prof. Kern's opinion on the subject.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 109; JRAS., 1901, pp. 855-8.

[3] Kern, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

the monarch refers to the whole Saṁgha and not any part thereof, that is, to the whole undivided Buddhist Church, and that some attempt at schism must have already been made in his time, as otherwise there is no meaning in taking comprehensive measures to suppress all heresy.

The question is sometimes asked: what was the position of Aśoka with reference to the Buddhist Church? Was his attitude autocratic or subservient in his dealings with the Church of his faith? The only records that may enable us to arrive at any solution are, of course, the two that we have already considered, namely, the Sārnāth and Bhābrū Edicts. The former of these, as we have seen, aims at nipping a threatening schism in the bud. Unfortunately, the initial portion of this inscription has been much effaced, and this prevents us from knowing how the Mahāmātras were to determine whether any particular Bhikshu or Bhikshuṇī was an apostate or not. Was the Saṁgha to decide this matter by a majority, and were the Mahāmātras to be guided solely by its decision? If the lost portion of the Sārnāth Edict had been preserved, it would have probably thrown some light upon this matter. But it must be remembered that this record has been called a *śāsana* or order by Aśoka and that the king directs the Mahāmātras to communicate his order to every Saṁgha of Bhikshus or

Bhikshuṇīs in his dominions. If here he is merely carrying into effect what the great body of the Buddhist Saṁgha itself resolved upon after full and mature deliberations, the announcement of such an order to its smaller bodies would be altogether superfluous. He thus seems to have issued the order without any reference to, and even without the previous knowledge of, his Church which probably never had the system of administration enjoyed by the Christian Church in Europe. Possibly he may have had some Theras or seniormost Bhikshus at his capital to instruct him as to what constituted heresy in any particular case, but it was the king who wanted to obliterate it with all the force and authority of his secular government. The same inference is pointed to by a critical examination of the Bhābrū Edict. There Aśoka recommends certain Buddhist texts not to the laity merely but to the clergy principally. Again, he asks the latter not simply to hear them recited but also to meditate upon them, although he himself is a layman. And why is Aśoka doing all that ? In order that the Good Dhaṁma may long endure. Of course, there can be no question that the scriptural passages he has selected are devoid of all ritualistic or metaphysical encumbrances, and are just of such a nature as to engender spiritual elevation, but it cannot be gainsaid that it is his own object that he is

furthering and also by the method which he has himself thought of,—a method which is to be implicitly followed not by the laics only but also the clericals. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he was the head not only of his own empire but also of the Church to which he pertained; in other words, he was no less an ecclesiastical than a civil ruler. It is not right, however, to charge Aśoka with having usurped the ecclesiastical power which legitimately belonged to the Saṁgha. For Buddha himself has allowed his own prescriptions to be set aside for the sake of the royal pleasure and ordained Bhikshus to obey kings.[1] And when such a king is of the type of Aśoka who entertained a genuine love for their faith and was raising it to the position of a world religion the Saṁgha would naturally and gladly follow his lead.

[1] *Mahāvagga*, III. 4.

CHAPTER IV

Aśoka's Dhamma

We have seen in the second chapter what Aśoka did for the temporal good of his people and are in a position to form our own estimate of him as a ruler. He no doubt strove very hard for the temporal welfare of his subjects. But what has made Aśoka entitled to worldwide renown, and, in fact, the principal object, which he had invariably before his mind and on the realisation of which he prided himself, was the spiritual good of man, the dissemination of what he loved to call Dhaṁma, not only in his country but far beyond in the dominions of his independent neighbours. It, therefore, behoves us, in the first place, to ascertain what exactly Aśoka understood by Dhaṁma. He is quite explicit on this point, and gives us not only the attributes that fall under the term but also specific practices thereof, which he is never wearied of asking his people again and again to bring into action. In Pillar Edicts II. and VII., Aśoka specifies the qualities, which, in his opinion, constitute Dhaṁma. With him Dhaṁma consists of (1) *sādhave* or *bahu-kayāne*, much good,

(2) *ap-āsinave*, little defilement, (3) *dayā* mercy, (4) *dāne*, liberality, (5) *sache*, truthfulness, (6) *sochaye*, purity, and (7) *mādave*, gentleness. But how are these virtues to be put into practice? Aśoka makes several enumerations of duties in this connection, which vary but slightly in different inscriptions. These may be summed up as follows: *anāraṁbho prāṇānaṁ*, non-slaughter of 'breathing' creatures; *avihisā bhūtānaṁ*, non-injury to 'existing' creatures; *mātari pitari susrūsā*, hearkening to father and mother; *thaira susrūsā*, hearkening to the elders; *gurūnaṁ apachiti*, reverence to teachers; *mita-saṁstuta-nātikānaṁ bahmaṇa-samaṇānaṁ dānaṁ saṁpaṭipati*, liberality and seemly behaviour towards friends, acquaintances and relatives and towards Brāhmaṇ and Śramaṇa ascetics; *dāsa-bhatakamhi samyapratipati*, seemly behaviour to slaves and servants; and, in one inscription only (R. E. III.), *apa-vyayatā* and *apa-bhāṇḍatā*, small expense and small accumulation. This is part of Aśoka's message to the world for all climes and for all ages. It sounds almost a truism, and yet how lucid, simple and true! He does not rest satisfied by merely telling us to practise *dayā*, *ḍāna*, *mārdava*, mercy, liberality, gentleness, and so forth, but also shows how these virtues are to be translated into action. Thus *dayā*, mercy, means *anāraṁbho prāṇānaṁ*, *avihisā bhūtānaṁ*, non-destruction and even

non-injury to creatures; *dāna*, liberality, means liberality towards friends, acquaintances and relatives and towards ascetics whether they belong to the Brahmanical or Śramaṇa sects; and *mārdava*, gentleness, is to be manifested by hearkening to the parents and the elders, and seemly behaviour not only towards relatives or Brāhmaṇ and Śramaṇa recluses but also towards slaves and servants.

Aśoka is so fond of this part of his message that he takes delight in iterating it again and again in his edicts. In Rock Edict XIV. he frankly confesses that certain words have been repeated over and over again because of the sweetness of their import. The word Dhaṁma and its import are so sweet to him that he not only repeats the code of duties which constitute it, but also extols it by instituting a comparison between Dhaṁma and the ordinary practices of life and establishing the superiority of the former over the latter. Thus in Rock Edict IX. he speaks of Dhaṁma, or *Dhaṁma-maṁgala* as he calls it, in contradistinction with the *maṁgalas* or the rites for inducing luck and averting calamities, which, in Aśoka's time as now, obtained in legion in Hindu society. "People perform," says he in that edict, "various (lucky) rites in sicknesses, at marriages, on the birth of sons, and on journey.........In this matter, however, womankind performs much, manifold (but)

trivial, useless rite. Rites should undoubtedly be performed. But a rite of this kind bears little fruit. That rite, however, bears great fruit which is *Dhaṁma-maṁgala,*" that is, the rite which consists in the fulfilment of Dhaṁma. And after this he goes on inculcating the duties which form the practical character of his teaching and which have just been enumerated. Similarly, in Rock Edict XI. he draws a contrast between *dāna* or ordinary gift and *Dhaṁma-dāna* or gift of Dhaṁma. The latter, he tells us, is the highest form of *dāna,* and means making one acquainted with Dhaṁma, participate in Dhaṁma, and thus become a kinsman of Dhaṁma. And in order to explain this Dhaṁma he again enumerates his ethical practices, and winds up by saying that this *Dhaṁma-dāna* or alms-giving of Dhaṁma can be conferred by anybody on anybody, by father on his son or *vice versâ* by brothers upon one another, by relatives upon one another, and, in fact, by everybody upon his neighbour. Likewise, in Rock Edict XIII. Aśoka compares *vijaya* or ordinary conquest with *Dhaṁma-vijaya* or conquest through Dhaṁma and in such a way as to conduce to the exaltation of the latter. In this connection he refers to his territorial conquest of Kaliṅga, and, with great heaviness of heart and even a little sense of shame, he speaks of the terrible massacre he inflicted on soldiers and

the acute misery and grief of bereavement he caused to their relatives. These are the diabolical concomitants of a territorial conquest. But the conquest through Dhaṁma, says he, is *prītirasa* or flavoured with love, and can be accomplished anywhere, not only up to the outlying provinces of his empire but also in the dominions of his independent neighbours, whether they are in India or far beyond its north-western frontiers, where rule the Yavana or Greek princes, Antiochus Theos, Ptolemy Philadelphos, and so forth.

We have thus seen what qualities and what practices go to make up Aśoka's Dhaṁma. But this is not all that we have to understand by his Dhaṁma. These qualities and practices form only its positive character. But Aśoka's Dhaṁma has also a negative side, which may be summed up in the one word, *ap-āsinava*, that is, the least possible *āsinava*. But what is *āsinava* ? Aśoka gives a reply to this question in Pillar Edict III., where he places it side by side with *pāpa*, and specifies the malevolent affections that lead to *āsinava*. They are : *chaṁḍiye*, impetuosity ; *niṭhuliye*, cruelty, *kodhe*, anger, *māne*, pride ; and *isyā*, malice. Thus not only the moral duties enumerated by Aśoka, but also freedom from these passions, is necessary for the full and adequate fulfilment of Dhaṁma.

It will be seen that Aśoka had thus a definite message to give to this world. And it is a pity that this has not yet been clearly perceived. In regard to the positive side of Dhaṁma, he specifies not only the attributes that constitute it but also the ethical practices in which they are to manifest themselves. As regards the negative character of his Dhaṁma he has taken care to enumerate the malevolent affections which impel a man tos in and depravity (*āsinava*), and to exhort us to keep ourselves as free from them as possible. But this is not all. Like a true prophet he has clearly apprehended what debars spiritual progress, and has suggested a remedy which enables us to pursue the evolution of piety unhampered. This remedy is the self-examination which he inculcates on our minds as absolutely necessary for the real development of Dhaṁma. The idea of self-examination is looked upon at present as so essentially Christian both in origin and practice that one is apt to doubt whether Aśoka, as a matter of fact, preached the duty of introspection. It is, however, worthy of note that Buddhaghosha in his *Visuddhi-magga* distinguishes between various forms of *pachchavekkhana*, which has been consecrated to the sense of 'examination of conscience,' 'self-examination.' And this idea of *pachchavekkhana* he has adopted from Buddha himself, who taught it to Ambalatthika-Rāhula.

Buddha's discourse to Rāhula occurs in the Majjhima Nikāya, and is no doubt one of the texts referred to approvingly by Aśoka himself in the Bhābru Edict, as we have seen in the last chapter. Therein Buddha exhorts Rāhula to examine every act of the body, speech or mind before and also after it is initiated. Aśoka, however, is more human and teaches us to examine our character as a whole and thus take a broader outlook of our activities. "Man," says he, in pillar Edict III., "seeth his good deed only, saying unto himself: 'this good deed have I performed.' In no wise doth he see his sin (*pāpa*), and say unto himself: 'this sin have I committed,' or 'this indeed is *āsinava*.' This, however, is a matter where self-examination is difficult. Nevertheless, man should see to this, and say unto himself:—'such and such (passions), indeed, lead to *āsinava*,......and by reason (of them) I may cause my fall." It is in this place that Aśoka enumerates the malevolent affections which conduce to *āsinava*,—and we have already seen what they are. Here Aśoka is evidently referring to the natural tendency of the human being to perceive and chuckle over the good he performs but not to see and regret the ill, the sinfulness, he is committing. Aśoka, therefore, very aptly remarks that it is very difficult for a person to conduct self-examination and see through the evil he has committed. He,

however, insists upon self-scrutiny being carried on in order that man may not bring about his own fall. If this is not what the Christians understand by 'self-examination,' it is difficult to see what self-examination really is. What, again, is worthy of note here is the word which Aśoka uses for 'self-examination.' This word is *paṭivekhā*, which, except for a little irregularity of form, is exactly the same as *pachchavekkhana* which, as we have seen, Buddha himself employs in the sense of 'examination of the conscience.' It is not, therefore, permissible to doubt that Aśoka taught 'self-examination' to his people, and regarded it as essential to spiritual progress.

Any one who considers Aśoka's code of Dhaṁma cannot fail to be struck by the remarkably simple nature of his teaching. His Dhaṁma may be described as the common property of all religions. The virtues and practices which he tells us to follow are precisely those which all religions specify as worthy of our imitation. One is, therefore, almost tempted to say that there is nothing new or original in what he teaches. He himself admits as much in one of his edicts, Rock-Edict XIII., where he says that "there is no country except that of the Yavanas where there are not the Brāhmaṇa and Śramaṇa congregations and there is no place in any country where men have no faith in one sect or another," and that, in fact, "everywhere dwell these

Brāhmanic, Śramanic and other sects and householders among whom are established such practices as hearkening to the elders, hearkening to parents, hearkening to the preceptors, seemly behaviour and steadfast devotion to friends, acquaintances, companions and relatives, and to slaves and servants." Is this not tantamount to Aśoka's admission that his Dhaṁma, which involves the performance of these duties, is something which all sects possess in common? This is just the reason why in another place (Rock-Edict VII.) he gives expression to his intense desire that "all sects may dwell at all places (in his kingdom), because they all desire self-restraint and purification of heart." "The people, however," he continues, "are of various likings and various attachments. They will perform either the whole or a part (of their duty). But he is certainly a low man who has no self-restraint and purity of heart, though he may have lavish liberality." What Aśoka means is that *saṁyama*, self-restraint, and *bhāva-śuddhi*, purification of heart, are virtues of such paramount excellence that every individual ought to develop them in himself. These virtues, again, are inculcated by every sect, and form the chief portion of its commandment. Whether the whole commandment will be put into practice by a member of a sect is doubtful. But it is supremely imperative

on him to cultivate at least these two virtues, the negation of which can never be compensated by any degree of liberality, gratitude or devotion that he may show to his sect. The same exhortation has been set forth by Aśoka in clearer language and at greater length in Rock Edict XII. This edict is so important, as it faithfully portrays his attitude towards the different religions, that no excuse is needed for giving the full substance of it here. Aśoka says that he does not think of librality and outward reverence to one's own religion so much as of the growth of its essential (*sāravadhi*). This growth of the essential is of various kinds, but at the root of it is restraint of speech. In other words, a person must not make an exhibition of reverence to his own sect and condemn another's without any good reason. On the contrary, the other sects should be shown reverence to for this and that reason. By so doing a person exalts his own sect, and does service to another's sect. By doing otherwise, he does harm to both. He who shows reverence to his own sect and condemns that of another because he is attached to his own sect and wants to illuminate it, inflicts, in reality, a severe injury on it. What course of action then is commendable in these circumstances? Aśoka replies: "people shall hear and desire to hear further one another's Dhaṁma." What will be the

consequence of this? Aśoka describes it as follows. All sects, says he first, will thereby be possessed of much information and knowledge (*bahu-śruta*) and will conduce to the good of the world (*kalyāṇ-āgama*). There will thus arise, he also says, the exaltation of one's own sect (*ātma-pāsaṁḍa-vaḍhi*) and the illumination of Dhaṁma (*Dhaṁmasa dīpanā*). This, in fact, is what Aśoka says in Rock Edict XII., and offers pabulum for reflection even to the present age. What he implies is that every religion, or Dhaṁma in its more extensive senses, has two sides: (1) doctrinal and (2) ethical. The first concerns itself with questions of ritual and theology, and appeals to the intellect. The second is represented by Dhaṁma in its less extensive but proper sense, by what a man of sense, a man of right feeling, will naturally do; in other words, it appeals to the conscience as the modern people will say. So far as the doctrinal portion of a religion goes, there will always be diverse and mutually conflicting views not only in regard to the articles of belief but also in regard to the ritual we have to observe. This must be so, because the human intellect varies so widely. So far, however, as the ethical side of a religion is concerned, there is no divergence, no conflict, but perfect unanimity as regards the moral virtues and the moral practices we have to manifest in our conduct.

This must be so, because the conscience, the sense of right and wrong, can never vary. What, therefore, the ethical side of a religion teaches cannot be something which is peculiar to that religion, but rather must be the common property of all religions. It is really the essence of all religions, and the Dhaṁma, which Aśoka teaches and which we have so far considered, is really this essence. On the other hand, the moment we give a loose rein to our intellect, there is no end to the discussion we can carry on in matters connected with ritual and theology; and very often this discussion is nothing but acrimonious wrangling. It is this which tends the people to eulogise their sect even when no occasion calls for it, or run down other sects without any good reason,—a fanatic spirit, in fact, aganist which Aśoka, as we have seen, has so strongly protested. That there was this propensity to exalt one's own sect and revile that of another, that there were often hot and bitter debates between one sect and another over doctrinal points in Aśoka's time which put the essentials of a religion into background is quite clear from the strong expostulations in which he has thought fit to indulge. It is even possible to be more definite on this point and find out in what quarters exactly this animosity, this carping spirit, prevailed. For Aśoka distinctly tells us that the work of generating sympathy

and concord between one sect and anothei was entrusted to the Dharma-Mahāmātras, Stry-dhyaksha-Mahāmātras and Vachabhūmikas. We know that the Dharma-Mahāmātras were occupied with all sects, the most prominent of which were the Brahmanical Ājīvikas, Nirgranthas and Buddhists. And as these officials have been instructed to attain this object, it is plain that there were friction and bitter spirit between these sects. Stryadhyaksha-Mahāmātras were, of course, officers who were concerned with the welfare and happiness of women. And as they too have been ordered to attain the same object, it is evident that sectarian fervour and intolerant spirit were being displayed by women also. It is a pity we do not know yet who the Vachabhūmikas were and what their function was. But it is sufficiently clear that the tendency to eulogise one's sect and disparage that of another through religious frenzy was displayed by all the principal sects of the period and that women who are naturally more religious-minded were by no means free from it. When, therefore, Aśoka lived and preached, religious fanaticism and sectarian spirit were rampant. And at a time when the people's attention is rivetted not on the essential but on the non-essential element of a religion, it requires the penetrating insight and religious strength of a prophet to distinguish the essential from the non-essential and proclaim

it to the world. As a matter of fact, this is what Aśoka has done. What constitutes his originality of mind as of all saints is his concentration on the essence of religion which all sects possess in common, especially at a time when they have lost sight of it. It is interesting to note by what means he attempted to divert the mind of his people from the non-essential to the essential element of religion. He exhorts the people to hearken and desire to hearken still more to one another's Dhaṁma, by which he here means not only the ethics but also the ritual and theology of a sect. The effect of such a step must be at once to show to them that although one sect differed from one another, they agreed in many important points. The attention of the people would thus be drawn to the points of agreement which, they must naturally conclude, constituted the essence of a religion. When the essential is thus selected and emphasised, the people would consider it to be their primary duty to put it into practice, and the result is that there is *dhaṁmasa dīpanā*, illumination of Dhaṁma, and that the sects must thus contribute to the welfare of the world (*kalyāṇ-āgama*). But like a true thinker Aśoka did not neglect the non-essential, that is, the sacerdotal, side of a religion which comprised ritual and theology and which appealed more to the intellect than to the moral or religious sense.

By hearkening to one another's Dhaṁma, as proposed by Aśoka, people have to listen to and consider the doctrinal points also of the various sects. They will thus have for their reflection and judicious selection various forms of philosophy, nature lore and ceremonial devolped by the various sects. They must consequently become *bahu-śruta*, that is, possessed of much knowledge and information, and be able to evolve their own system of ritual and theology in a satisfactory fashion. When the people in this manner hearken to one another's Dhaṁma, note the essence of religion, and emphasize it for conduct, and by a careful sifting of the different rituals and theologies of the different sects construct their own creed, they can thereby achieve the *ātma-pāsaṁḍa-vaḍhi*, or the exaltation of their own sect, which was one of the uppermost thoughts in Aśoka's mind. The Dhaṁma of Aśoka is thus the essence of religion, and to perceive it in all religions and single it out for practice, and to study and weigh impartially and dispassionately their ritual and theology so as to enable us to frame our own theory in regard to the relation of man with nature is what the royal prophet of the third century B. C. teaches us. How grand and convincing this message, and how indispensable even to the present times! If we but devoutly follow the words of this master mind and study not only Hinduism and Muhammadanism but

also Christianity, Zoroastrianism and even fetichism, how rich and exalted the world will be both spiritually and intellectually!

No account of Aśoka's Dhaṁma can be complete unless we know with what ultimate end the Dhaṁma was to be pactised. In other words, what is the *summum bonum* reserved for those who followed Dhaṁma? Did Aśoka believe in the future world? This question has, of course, to be answered in the positive. He often contrasts this with the next world. Thus in Pillar Edict IV. while speaking of the Rajjukas, he says that he expects their officers to promote the *hidata* and *pālata* of the provincial people, that is, their happiness in this world and the next. Similarly, in the Dhauli and Jaugadā Seperate Edict I., he tells us that the uppermost desire of his mind is that his subjects should attain to welfare and happiness, *hida-lokika* and *pāla-lokika*, that is, pertaining both to this and the other world. But what is it in the next world that a man secures by following Dhaṁma? Aśoka replies: *svarga*, heaven. There are at least three references to *svarga* in his edicts. In Rock Edict VI. Aśoka says that whatever effort he puts forth he puts forth in order to make his people happy and in order that they may attain to *svarga* in the next world. In Minor Rock Edict I., he insists upon his officers of all ranks endeavouring strenuously to make his

subjects obtain *svarga.* In Rock Edict IX., however, he tells us something more. It is this edict, which, we have seen, refers to his *Dhaṁma-maṃgala,* that is, the auspicious rite which consists in the fulfilment of Dhaṁma. In two recensions of this edict he observes that the performance of Dhaṁma leads to the attainment of *svarga.* And the same thing he explains in different language in three copies of the same edict. "Every worldly rite," he remarks, "is of a dubious nature. It may or may not accomplish its object. *Dhaṁma-maṃgala,* however, is not conditioned by time, and even though it may not achieve any object here, it begets endless merit in the next world." In other words, what Aśoka means is that performance of Dhaṁma breeds much *puṇya* or merit in the next world and thus enables a man to attain to *svarga.*

The simple character of the Dhaṁma taught by Aśoka in his edicts is apparently in conflict with the fact that he was a Buddhist when he preached that Dhaṁma, and has much puzzled the scholars. Thus Dr. Fleet held the view that the Dhaṁma of the Rock and Pillar Edicts was not Buddhism at all but simply *rāja-dharma,* that is, a code of duties prescribed for kings.[1] But we have already shown that the Dhaṁma referred to by Aśoka even in these edicts cannot

[1] JRAS, 1908, pp. 491-7.

possibly be any kind of rules intended for rulers and governors to follow for good administration, but rather for the people in general to put into practice for leading righteous lives. Similarly, it has been contended by another writer that in these edicts Dhaṁma "does not stand for Buddhism, but for the simple piety which Aśoka wished all his subjects of whatever faith to practice."[1] That late Dr. V.A. Smith in one place in his *Asoka*[2] says: "The *Dharma*, or Law of Piety, which he preached and propagated unceasingly with amazing faith in the power of sermonizing, had few, if any, distinctive features. The doctrine was essentially common to all Indian religions, although one sect or denomination might lay particular stress on one factor in it rather than on another." And yet in another place[3] he says: The *dhaṁma* of the Edicts is that Hindu *dharma* with a difference, due to a Buddhist tinge, nay, rather due to saturation with the ethical thought which lies at the basis of Buddhism, but occupies a subordinate place in Hinduism." This is something like a contradiction, because at one time he admits that there was nothing distinctively Buddhistic in Aśoka's Dhaṁma, and at another he asserts that that Dhaṁma was saturated with Buddhist ethical

[1] J. M. Macphail, *Asoka*, p. 48.

[2] Pp. 59-60.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 29-30.

thought. Similarly, in one place, Smith says that the inducements of *svarga* held out by Aśoka were "hardly consistent with the Buddhist philosophy of most books," and yet in another he remarks that very probably the monarch looked forward to *nirvāṇa* although he did not express the hope. [1] Thus there are some scholars like Fleet and Smith who have not been able to reconcile the apparently non-distinctive, non-sectarian, character of Aśoka's Dhaṁma with the fact of his being a Buddhist even at the time when he preached it. On the other hand, we have a scholar like M. Senart who has seen some points of contact between Aśoka's teaching and the Buddhist *Dhaṁma-pada*, and who considers Aśoka's inscriptions as representing such a whole and entire picture of Buddhism of that period as to justify the conclusion that up till the time of that monarch Buddhism was "a purely moral doctrine, paying little attention to particular dogmas or to abstract theories, little embarrassed with scholastic or monkish elements, ...and as yet without a regularly defined canon."[2] The resemblances noticed by the French savant do not, however, appear to be of much importance except two. Besides, the Buddhist Dhaṁmapada possesses many texts in common with such Brahmanical works as the Mahābhārata, and it

[1] *Asoka*, pp. 64-5.
[2] I.A., 1891, pp. 264-5.

is doubtful whether the former can be regarded as an exclusively Buddhist work. And no scholar seems yet to have accepted the further statement of M. Senart based simply on the strength of the epigraphic records of Aśoka that up till the middle of the third century B. C., Buddhism was founded on the preference for the fulfilment of moral duties over the execution of the liturgical forms and practices. It is a mistake to suppose that Aśoka's epigraphs portray the whole of Buddhism in his time. The Dhaṁma of this period, again, fell into two divisions: (1) Dhaṁma for the monks and nuns, and (2) Dhaṁma for the householders. Aśoka was a householder, at any rate, he was so when he preached his Dhaṁma; and the people to whom he taught it were also householders, not men who had embraced the monastic life. If, therefore, it is desired to find out whether his Dhaṁma was at all inspired by Buddhism, it is necessary to ascertain what scriptural texts have been reserved by that religion for the lay people to read, contemplate, and practise. The most important that has been prescribed for the Buddhist laity is the *Sigālovāda-sutta* comprised in the *Dīgha-Nikāya* of the Buddhist scriptures. This is considered so important that it has been designated *gihi-vinaya*—'Institute for the housemen.'[1] "In this Sutta," says Buddhaghosha, "there is left

[1] JRAS., 1915, p. 809.

nothing undescribed that constitutes the whole duty of a houseman. The Suttanta is, therefore, entitled *gihi-vinaya*—'Institute for the housemen.' Wherefore, if any person having hearkened to it, carries out what he is instructed therein, he may be expected not to decline, but to prosper." Such is the degree of importance attached to this Sutta, of course, from the laity's point of view. The gist of it is as follows; Buddha was once staying near Rājagṛiha in the Bamboo Wood; and, going out as usual for alms, observes Sigāla, a householder's son, with wet hair and garments and with clasped hands uplifted, paying worship to the several quarters of earth and sky. On Buddha asking the reason why, Sigāla says that he does this worship, holding sacred his father's word. Buddha, however, replies that in the religion of an Ariyan, the six quarters should not be worshipped thus. And on being requested to explain how they should be worshipped, Buddha points out at great length that the best way to worship the quarters is by good deeds to men around him, and sums up the whole thing in a few Gāthās, the first of which may be quoted here:[1]

Mother and father are the Eastern view,
And teachers are the quarters of the South.

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 143-4; SBB., Vol. IV, pp. 173 & ff.

And wife and children are the Western view,
And friends and kin the quarter to the North;
Servants and working folk the nadir are,
And overhead the Brahmin and recluse.
These quarters should be worshipped by the man
Who fifty ranks as houseman in his clan.

Anybody who even hurriedly considers these verses cannot fail to mark that it enumerates just those courses of conduct which Aśoka is never tired of inculcating on the minds of his people. Hearkening to parents, reverence to teachers, liberality and seemly behaviour towards friends, acquaintances, and relatives, and towards Brāhmaṇ and Śramaṇa ascetics, and seemly behaviour towards slaves and servants are the practices of Dhaṁma on which Aśoka has laid so much stress and are exactly those which Buddha emphasizes to make Sigāla a good, virtuous householder. The code of duties on which Aśoka insists may contain nothing that will not be assented to by other religious sects, such as Jainism, Ājīvikism, and so forth, but most of these duties are, as it were, brought to a focus and found mentioned in this group in the Sigālovāda-Sutta,[1] a text which has been prescribed by Buddhism for its laity. And it is impossible to resist the conclusion that it is this

[1] There are other Buddhist Suttas also which enumerate similar ethical practices; for instance, *Aṅguttara*—N., III, 76-8.

16

religion that is the basis and the source of inspiration in regard to Aśoka's Dhaṁma. If any further proof is required, it is supplied by another Sutta, which also must be noticed in this connection. The Buddhist Sutta, which is next in importance to the Sigālovāda-Sutta as regards lay conduct is the Mahāmaṅgala-Sutta contained in the Sutta-nipāta. It recommends a certain group of duties, the performance of which constitutes the greatest of *maṁgalas* to a layman. This use of the word *maṁgala* to denote righteous practices reminds us of the phrase—*Dhaṁma-maṁgala*, which Aśoka employs in Rock Edict IX. in the sense of "the fulfilment of Dhaṁma tantamount to the most efficacious *maṁgala*." And it leaves no doubt as to his being indebted for this idea and phraseology to the Buddhist canonical text just referred to. Even in the enumeration of practices there are points of agreement between the Mahāmaṅgala-Sutta, on the one hand and Aśoka's Rock Edicts, on the other. The Sutta commends, as the greatest of *maṅgalas*, "waiting on father and mother, protecting wife and child, giving alms, taking care of relatives, abstaining from sin, intercourse with Śramaṇas, and religious conversations at due seasons."[1] Here, again, is another enumeration of most of the qualities and practices referred to by Aśoka under Dhaṁma. We have further to

[1] SBE., Vol. X. (Pt. II), p. 43.

note that just as Aśoka compares ordinary *maṅgala* with *Dhaṁma-maṅgala*, he compares ordinary *dāna* with *Dhaṁma-dāna*, and describes the unquestionable superiority of the latter over the former. The use of the phrase, *Dhaṁma-dāna*, must have been suggested to Aśoka, as was pointed out by M. Senart,[1] by a verse from the *Dhaṁma-pada*, *sabba-dānaṁ dhaṁma-dānaaṁ jināti*, 'the gift of Dhaṁma exceeds all gifts.' Here, however, there is no mention of the virtues and practices as we find in the Mahāmaṅgala-Sutta.

If it is once grasped that Aśoka was himself a lay follower of Buddhism and preached to the householders, and that his teaching was based on what that religion ordained for its laity, there is nothing surprising in the fact that he makes no mention of the Nirvāṇa or the *ashṭāṅgika-mārga* in his edicts, but, on the contrary, speaks of *svarga* and holds it up as the reward of Dhaṁma in the next life. According to Buddhism, the doctrine of heaven and hell is especially the layman's religion, the higher attainments and the goal of Nirvāṇa being reserved for a Bhikshu. This was just the view of Buddha, who has more then once implied that a pious householder is born in the next world as a god in one of the heavens.[2] It is therefore

[1] IA., 1891, p. 262.

[2] *Majjhima-N.*, I. 289 & 388.

no wonder at all, if Aśoka regards *svarga* as the *summum bonum* to be attained for leading a virtuous life on earth. The belief in *svarga* is not something peculiar to Buddhism, but was shared by many religious sects. And the question that really arises is whether Aśoka believed in *svarga* such as that described in Buddhist works. In Rock Edict IV. Aśoka says: "But now in consequence of the practice of Dhaṁma by king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, the sound of the drum has become the sound of Dhaṁma, after his having shown to the people spectacles of aerial chariots (*vimānas*), spectacles of elephants (*hastins*), masses of fire (*agni-skandhas*), and other divine representations." What he means is that with him the drum has become the proclaimer of Dhaṁma. The sound of a drum invariably precedes either a battle, a public announcement, or the exhibition of a scene to the people. But since he entered on his career of Dhaṁma, it has ceased to be a summons to fight, but invites people to come and witness certain spectacles; and as these spectacles are of such a character as to generate and develop Dhaṁma, the drum has thus become the proclaimer of Dhaṁma. But what spectacles did Aśoka show to his subjects? Obviously they were the *vimānas*, *hastins*, *agni-skandhas*, and so forth. The exact sense of these terms has been made clear by a work in the Pāli literature called

Vimānavatthu. It describes the various rewards which are in store for a virtuous man in his next life as he becomes one kind or another of *deva* according to the degree of his merit. One of these rewards is the *vimāna* or column-supported palace which is a centre of supreme bliss and which could be moved at the will of its divine owner. Another kind of reward is the *hastin* or well-caparisoned, all-white, celestial elephant. The Vimāna-vatthu, again, describes most of the gods as possessed of a resplendent complexion, which is compared to lightning, star, or fire; and when, therefore, Aśoka says that he exhibited *agni-skandhas* or *jyotiḥ-skandhas* to his people, what he must have done is that he showed what kinds of lustre emitted from the bodies of virtuous men when they became gods in their next birth. The lives of the Devas in heavens according to Hindu belief then as now are limited, and depend upon the merit accruing from their good acts. What the Vimāna-vatthu, however, does is only to describe according to the Buddhist notion, what celestial abodes and vehicles were reserved for the pious people, and lay particular stress on them, in order to induce readers and listeners to lead good unblemished lives on earth and be zealous in the performance of religious duties. Evidently, the mention by Aśoka not only of the *vimānas* but also of *hastins* and *agni* or *jyotiḥ-skandhas* as being the cause of the development

of righteousness among his people is a clear proof of the fact that the system of *svarga* in which he believed and to which he refers in his twelfth year is that known to and evolved by Buddhism.

The above considerations are quite enough to convince anybody that Aśoka was a Buddhist, when he preached the Dhaṁma set forth in his Rock and Pillar Edicts and that there are clear traces of this Dhaṁma being inspired and inculcated by Buddhism. It may, however, be now asked: was he indebted for this solely to Buddhism? did he borrow and assimilate anything from any other religion? Aśoka himself has advised his people to listen to one another's Dhaṁma in order that they may exalt their religion and themselves become *bahu-śruta*, 'well-informed.' What he has exhorted others to do he must have himself done. Are there any elements in his Dhaṁma or his own conduct, which were not Buddhistic and which were adopted from other faiths? Anybody, who carefully considers the negative side of his Dhaṁma cannot fail to be struck by the curious word *āsinava* and also the malaffections which he mentions as contributing to it. What is this word, *āsinava*? How is it to be derived? In Pillar Edict III., *āsinava* has been mentioned side by side with *pāpa*, 'sin', and in Rock Edict X., we meet with the word *palisave* in the

sense of *apuṇya*, 'demerit'. It, therefore, seems at first sight that *āsinava* of Aśoka is the same as *āsava* (=*āsrava*) of Buddhism, which has precisely the same signification. But the Buddhists have three kinds of *āsava*: (1) *kām-āsava*, 'sensual pleasure', (2) *bhav-āsava*, 'love of existence', and (3) *avijj-āsava*, 'defilement of ignorance'. Sometimes they add to this list a fourth one, namely, *diṭṭh-āsava*, that is, 'heresy'. Aśoka, however, mentions five *āsinavas*, which, again, are of an entirely different nature. They are, as we have seen, *chaṁḍiye*, 'impetuosity', *niṭhuliye*, 'cruelty,' *kodhe*, 'anger', *māne*, 'pride', and *isyā*, 'malice'. The conclusion is irresistible that, curiously enough, Aśoka, although he was a Buddhist, did not adopt the *āsavas* of Buddhism, though *āsava* apparently is the same as *āsinava*. From where could he then have borrowed his *āsinavas*? Bühler notes that "the Jainas possess a term *aṇhaya*, which exactly corresponds to *āsinava*, and is derived, like the latter, from *ā-snu*."[1] "Piyadasi's theory of the *āsinava*", he further remarks, "does not agree with the Buddhist doctrine of the three-fold or four-fold *āsava*, but comes closer to that of the Jain *aṇhaya*, which includes injury to living beings, lying, stealing, unchastity, and attachment to worldly possessions." Bühler seems to be right in so far as

[1] EI., Vol. II, p. 250.

he says that philologically Aśoka's *āsinava* comes closer to the Jaina *aṇhaya* than to the Buddhist *āsava*, but it is not quite clear how the *āsinavas* specified by the king approximate more to the *aṇhayas* of Jainism specified by Bühler. It must not, however, be supposed that Bühler's conclusion is wrong, though the evidence he has adduced does not support it. What we have to note here is that in Pillar Edict III., Aśoka mentions also *pāpa*, and side by side with *āsinava*, and asks us to steer clear of both. So far as my knowledge goes, Buddhist psychology does not place together and distinguish between *pāpa* and *āsinava* (=*āsava*). But every student of Jainism knows that Jaina philosophy makes this distinction. Thus Jainism specifies eighteen kinds of *pāpa* or sin and forty-two kinds of *āsravas*.[1] These two lists have four malevolent affections in common, called *kashāyas*. Two of these are *krodha* and *māna*,[2] exactly two of the passions named by Aśoka. The *isyā* of Aśoka, again, is to be found in the Jaina list of the *pāpas* as *īrshyā* or *dvesha*. *Chaṁḍiye* and *niṭhuliye* are alone not traceable, though they are no doubt covered by the malaffection *hiṁsā* mentioned

[1] Mrs. Stevenson, *Heart of Jainism*, p. 302 & ff. and p. 305 & ff. Such comparative enumerations of *pāpa* and *āsava* do not seem to be known to the Buddhist scriptures.

[2] Some of these malaffections are no doubt mentioned by the uBddhists, but they are classed under *kilesa*, not under *āsava* or *pāpa*.

under *āsrava*. Thus the distinction between *pāpa* and *āsinava* (*āsrava*) and the inclusion of at least three passions of the Jaina lists is enough to convince anybody that, in all likelihood, Aśoka has here adopted and assimilated some psychological concepts of Jainism. Again, it deserves to be noticed that the word *aṇhaya* alone does not occur in the early Jaina scriptures, but that the terms *āsava* and *parissava* [1] are also met with —all in one and the same sense. This also agrees with the fact that Aśoka uses not only *āsinava* which corresponds to and is the earlier form of *aṇhaya* but also *parisava* which is the same as *parissava*. We thus see that although Aśoka was an ardent follower of Buddhism, he was yet catholic enough to study other faiths such as Jainism, and adopt such features of the latter as commended themselves to him. The same conclusion is pointed to by the terminology he employs when he speaks of the various kinds of life. He uses such words as *jīva*, *pāṇa*, *bhūta* and *jāta*. Does this not remind us of the phraseology, *pāṇā bhūyā jīvā sattā*, which is employed, for instance, in the Āchārāṅga Sutta of the Jainas? [2] Of course, it is possible to contend that he never uses

[1] These two words occur also in Buddhist scriptures. But the latter contain no word, like the Jaina *aṇhaya*, which can correspond to the Aśokan *āsinava*. Is the Buddhist term *ādīnava* a mistake for *āsinava*?

[2] SBE., Vol. XXII, p. 36 & n. 1.

all of these words together, and may not have therefore, intended to distinguish between them. But it cannot be denied that at least *bhūta* Aśoka does contrast from *prāṇa*, when he enumerates his ethical practices, as in *anārambho prāṇānaṁ, avihisā bhūtānaṁ.* Buddhist literature nowhere distinguishes between *prāṇa* and *bhūta*, whereas Jaina scriptures not only distinguish them one from the other but also both from *jīva* and *satta.*

This leads to the question: what was Aśoka's attitude towards other religious sects? We have seen that in Rock Edict VII. he admits that all sects aim at self-restraint and purification of heart, and desires that they may dwell at any place in his empire. This point he has made clear in Rock Edict XIII. by saying that the practices of Dhaṁma which he is preaching are practically the same as are inculcated by these sects. And he takes us one step further by remarking in Rock Edict XII. that all people should love to listen to one another's Dhaṁma and thus augment its essence (*sāra*). That Aśoka really meant what he has said is clear from the fact that his Dhaṁma, though it is Buddhism in the main, contains elements borrowed from other religions, such as Jainism, as we have just shown. When such is his mental attitude towards the various sects, one can well believe him when he tells us that he

lavished gifts and honours on members of all sects, without any distinction, whether they were recluses or householders. And this belief is strengthened when we note that he regarded, as one of the constituents of Dhaṁma, respect and liberality towards Brāhmaṇs and Śramaṇas, that is, not only towards the non-Brahmanical sects other than Buddhism but also towards all Brahmanical sects. The Dharma-Mahāmātras also were ordered to promote the temporal and spiritual weal of *all* sects, not only of the Buddhist Saṁgha but also of the Nirgranthas, Brahmanical Ajīvikas, and so forth. The only action of his that is apparently inconsistent with his extremely tolerant attitude towards all religions is the prohibition of animal sacrifices to which he has referred in Rock Edict I. This, it is contended, was directed against the Brāhmaṇs and receives confirmation from a passage in Minor Rock Edict I. The passage, however, is no longer interpreted by any scholar of repute as showing hostility to Brahmanism. And in regard to Rock Edict I. it is admitted that it does speak of Aśoka having prohibited sacrifices, but it is by no means clear that this prohibition was meant to be universal and not confined merely to his royal household. And even supposing for the moment that he prohibited sacrifices all over his kingdom, it does not necessarily imply any antagonism to Brahmanism as some of the

Upanishads,[1] which are *śrutis* to a Brāhmaṇ, have declared themselves in no uncertain terms against animal sacrifices and in favour of *ahiṁsā*.

[1] JASB., 1920, p. 307.

CHAPTER V

Aśoka as a Missionary

We have seen what Aśoka was as a Buddhist and also that the Dhaṁma he preached was not simple piety common to all religions but the code of righteous practices laid down for a lay follower by Buddhism. Let us now find out what means he adopted for the promotion and propagation of Dhaṁma. Let us discuss what kind and degree of activity he displayed as a religious propagandist.

We have already seen that Aśoka embraced Buddhism in the eighth year of his reign. He was then an *upāsaka*, a layman. For two years and a half he continued to be a layman, and during this period, as he tells us, he did not show himself to be a zealot. But thereafter a change came over him, and about the middle of his tenth year he became a Bhikshu-gatika. This was like turning a new leaf in the book of his life. He suddenly developed his missionary activity, and exerted himself to such an extent that although it was scarcely more than a year that he was a Bhikshu-gatika, he felt himself justified in giving a glowing description of it. This he has done in two places, once in Minor Rock Edict I. and another time in Rock Edict

IV. In the first of these records which is addressed to his officers, Aśoka says: "During this period (that is, the period that he was a Bhikshu-gatika), human beings who were unmixed were caused to be mixed with gods throughout Jambudvīpa. This is the fruit of exertion. This is to be attained not by the superior (officer) only. But, indeed, it is possible for even a subordinate one, if he exerts himself, to cause people to attain to much heavenly bliss." In this edict Aśoka has described the result of his missionary work in a twofold manner, first by saying that he has made gods and men one another's associates and next by saying that his people will thereby obtain extreme heavenly felicity. What probably the Buddhist king means is that through his missionary efforts many people have become so holy and virtuous that some of them were born as Devas and became mixed with them after their demise, and others who were living would become so in their next life. But by what measures, it may now be asked, was Aśoka able to accomplish such a phenomenal result during the short space of a year or so? The reply is furnished by Rock Edict IV., where also the king gives a glowing account of his achievement. In this record, as we have seen from the last chapter, Aśoka informs us that he fostered and propagated Dhaṁma among his subjects by

showing them spectacles of the *vimānas*, *hastins*, and *agni-* or *jyotiḥ.-skandhas.* These represent the kinds of heavenly bliss that are in store for good virtuous people in their next birth when they become gods. We have thus to take note of this important fact, that is, of the first measure which Aśoka adopted for generating and developing his Dhaṁma. He showed to the people spectacles of the various classes of gods and of the various kinds of felicity they rolled in. In the last chapter it has been suggested that he must have exhibited these spectacles in the Samājas, not the Samājas or feasts where the people were treated to meat and drink, and which Aśoka condemned, but the Samājas or amphitheatres where the people were entertained with shows, music and dancing, and which he looked upon favourably. Perhaps the first step then which Aśoka adopted when he started his missionary career was the exhibition of the different orders of gods, their resplendent complexions, their heavenly palaces, celestial elephants and so forth, which constituted their pomp and glory. How long he continued the exhibition of such spectacles we do not know. Probably he was showing them the whole period of his reign, as it most effectively served two purposes, namely, that of amusing the people and also of inducing them to live a life of piety. But certain it is that he persisted in it for over

a year that he was a Bhikshu-gatika, and that although this period was not a big one, Aśoka thought that by this means there was much growth of Dhaṁma, to such an extent, indeed, that it had never developed to this degree ever before.

We have already seen that the celestial boons referred to by Aśoka have been graphically described in a Pāli work called *Vimāna-vatthu*. It is with much forethought that stress is laid upon their descriptions in this work, the object evidently being to induce the people to lead holy and pious lives. In this connection it is desirable to note a story narrated in Buddhist works[1] about Moggalāna, the right-hand disciple of Buddha, who was also a unique missionary. He succeeded in attracting such a number of followers to Buddhism that the preachers of other religions became jealous of him, and hired assassins to put him to death. But what was the secret of his missionary activity? By means of his perfection in supernatural powers, we are told, he used to go to heavens, meet the gods, and interrogate every one of them as to how he contrived to rise to the position of a god. And they used to tell him by performing what acts they became what kind of gods. Similarly, he used to go to the world of Hell

[1] *Commentary on the Dhaṁmapada*, III. 65 (P.T.S.); *Intro.* to *Jāt.*, p. 522.

and ask its unfortunate inmates the story of their sufferings. Moggalāna thereafter used to return to the earth and inform the people. This produced such a deep impression on the minds of the people that they used to flock to him in masses and get themselves converted to Buddhism. Most probably this story of Moggalāna was known to Aśoka. But even supposing for the moment that it was not, it does not require much stretch of imagination on the part of a thoughtful and enthusiastic propagandist such as Aśoka doubtless was, to bring into requisition the graphic descriptions of the various types of celestial felicity depicted in the *Vimāna-vatthu* and such works, and give it a practical turn by preparing actual representations of the *vimānas*, *hastins*, and so forth and exhibiting them to the people on such occasions as those of the Samājas where they must naturally gather in large masses. And if Moggalāna could secure a large number of followers by merely intimating orally what virtue ensured what heaven and what unrighteousness what hell, in what terrific numbers must the people have rushed to the faith of Aśoka when not mere verbal descriptions but actual representations of the heavens and the varieties of supreme bliss to be enjoyed there were placed by him before them. There is nothing at all surprising if even in such a short space of time as one year

or so, such a well-conceived, well-planned and well-carried-out propaganda work, as might be expected of Aśoka, gave him such wonderful results,—wonderful beyond all expectations.

There were other measures also which Aśoka adopted for the furtherance of his object. The beginning of his career as a Bhikshu-gatika, we have seen, synchronised with the formulation of another scheme, upon which he embarked. Rock Edict VIII. says:

"A long period has elapsed during which kings used to go out on tours of pleasures (*vihāra-yātrā*). Here there were chase and other similar diversions. Now, king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, repaired to Sambodhi (Bodhi Tree), when he had been consecrated ten years. Thus (originated) this touring for Dhamma. Here this happens, namely, visits and gifts to the Brāhmaṇ and Śramaṇa ascetics, visits and largesses of gold to the aged, and visits and instructions in and enquiries about Dhamma of the provincials."

Here Aśoka tells us that up till the tenth year of his reign he like the previous kings used to find relaxation in *vihāra-yātrās* or tours of pleasure, where he indulged in hunting and other sports. In that year he gave up the idea of ever going on *vihāra-yātrās*, and started instead the *Dharma-yātrās* where he now found his relaxation. The latter fulfilled also the object that was

uppermost in his mind, namely, the fostering of Dhaṁma. He developed Dhaṁma in himself by visiting and giving gifts to the recluses and mendicants of both the Brāhmaṇ and Śramaṇa sects. During these visits he must have listened to and studied the Dhaṁma of every sect and assimilated its essential features, thus making himself *bahu-śruta.* As regards the people, he propagated Dhaṁma among them by coming in their personal contact, preaching righteousness, and enquiring about their spiritual progress. In other words, Aśoka turned a missionary in the real sense of the term. But when and how did this event happen? In the tenth year of his reign, when he paid a visit to the Bodhi Tree. In fact, his visit to the Bodhi Tree, as we have seen, was the first of his Dharma-yātrās. And as this time coincided with that of his becoming a Bhikshu-gatika, it is difficult to avoid the inference that he began his career as Bhikshu-gatika with a visit to the Mahābodhi along with a Saṁgha of Bhikshus, and that the manifold spiritual benefits accruing not only to himself but also to his people induced him to repeat this Dharma-yātrā so as to make it a permanent feature of his missionary programme. We may, therefore, safely say that side by side with the exhibition of the heavens and the blisses associated therewith, Aśoka undertook the work of personally preaching to

his people, of course, with the same object in view, that is, for the dissemination of Dhaṁma.

The king actually taking upon himself the duty of preaching to his subjects must have produced a profound impression on their mind and must have been a most potent cause in the promotion of Dhaṁma all round. But the king, after all, was a single individual, and it was not possible for him to approach all people. Aśoka therefore thought it necessary to order his representatives, his officers, to follow in his footsteps and help him in the completion of the work personally started by him. This is clear from what he says in Pillar Edict VII., which, being a resumé of the whole work achieved by him up till the twenty-seventh year of his reign, naturally describes the various measures devised and adopted by him for the realisation of his object. The edict itself begins with a vivid expression of his extreme and genuine solicitude for the spread of Dhaṁma among his subjects. The words he uses are so instinct with sincerity that they are worth quoting:

"This occurred to me:—In times past kings had wished that men should grow with a befitting growth of Dhaṁma. But men did not grow with a befitting growth of Dhaṁma. How then may men be moved to conform (to Dhaṁma)? How may men grow with a befitting growth of Dhaṁma?

How may I uplift some of them with a growth of Dhaṁma? . . . This (idea) came to me: Proclamations of Dhaṁma (*Dhaṁma-sāvana*) will I proclaim. Instructions in Dhaṁma (*Dhaṁm-ānusathi*) will I instruct. Men hearkening thereto will conform, uplift themselves, and mightily grow with the growth of Dhaṁma."

It is quite clear from the above passage that the question of the propagation of Dhaṁma Aśoka was for a long time revolving in his mind in all seriousness and with much careful thought. He is however frank enough to admit that he was not the first king who thought of spreading Dhaṁma. But the efforts of the previous kings were not crowned with any success worth mentioning. He however appears to have much pondered over the problem and finally hit upon a line of action which he now resolved to carry out into effect for the attainment of his object And most of the means he so adopted he mentions in this edict. The first of these is *Dhaṁm-ānusathi*, 'Instructions in Dhaṁma,' and he further tells us that his officers, the Vyushṭas and the Rajjukas, who have been set to rule over hundreds of thousands of men, have been ordered to preach to the people. In Rock Edict III., however, he gives us somewhat more detailed information. There he tells us that in the twelfth year of his reign he commanded not only the Rajjukas but also the Prādeśikas and the

Yuktas, to go out on circuit tour every five years, to deliver instructions in Dhaṁma to the people as well as for the discharge of their office duties. And what are these instructions in Dhaṁma which they are to impress on the people? These are, of course, the ethical practices which make up his Dhaṁma, and it is these about which they are to preach to the people. We have seen above that the Rajjukas, Prādeśikas and Yuktas were, all of them, district officials of the highest grade and charged with such duties as required of them to tour in the districts. And over and above this office work they had to discharge in their periodical visits, they were now commissioned by Aśoka to perform like himself the duties of a missionary and preach Dhaṁma to the provincials. His district officers of the superior rank were thus not only officers but also teachers. Aśoka doubtless hit upon a novel and ingenious mode of propagating Dhaṁma. Certainly it was his own idea. It was not known to have been practised by any king prior to him, and even in later times the principle was observed only in the palmy days of the Portuguese rule in India when the highest officials at least combined the work of preachers with their ordinary duties.[1]

Dhaṁm-ānusathi was not, however, the only means, which Aśoka adopted for the spread of

[1] In J. M. Macphail's *Aśoka*, p. 48.

his Dhamma. The officers, the Vyushṭas, who in Pillar Edict VII., are asked to carry on *Dhamm-ānusathi* along with the Rajjukas have been asked also to proclaim *Dhamma-sāvanas*, that is, proclamations about Dhamma. These last apparently were of two kinds, that is, *sāvanas* which were intended for the officers of the districts and those for the people. The *Sāvanas*, of course, proclaimed the wish and will of the king. An instance of the first kind we have in Minor Rock Edict I. Here, as we have seen, the king tells us that during the period that he was a Bhikshu-gatika he did his utmost to bring gods and men together in order that the latter may attain to heaven. Seeing that his efforts in this respect were being followed with eminent success, he wanted not only all his officers but also his independent neighbours to adopt the same step. He had therefore *sāvanas* to that effect proclaimed through his Vyushṭa officers. Similarly, in Rock Edict XII., which teaches a spirit of toleration to the various sects, Aśoka says: "And those who are favourably disposed towards this or that sect should be informed: 'The Beloved of the gods does not so much think of gift or reverence as—what? —that there may be a growth of the essentials among all sects and also (mutual) appreciation!'" How were the people informed of this desire of their king? Of course, by means of *Sāvanas*

Both the instances of *Sāvana* just adduced have for their object the promotion of Dhaṁma. They can therefore with propriety be called *Dhaṁma-sāvanas*. Consequently these *Dhaṁma-sāvanas* constituted another means which Aśoka adopted for propagating Dhaṁma, as he informs us in Pillar Edict VII.

The third measure which Aśoka took for promoting Dhaṁma was the creation of Dharma-Mahāmātras. These officers, as we have seen, had to look to the spiritual as well as to the temporal good of the people. How they were to discharge the latter duty has been shown in Chapter II. Here we have to see how Aśoka used them for the promotion of Dhaṁma. It has been pointed out in the last chapter that there does not seem to have been much of good will and amity between one sect and another in his time. The teaching of the sects was practically identical in regard to the essentials, but there was much divergence on doctrinal matters. They ignored the points of agreement though they were the pith of religion and wrangled with one another about discrepant matters, though they were the unimportant features of a religion. It was therefore absolutely necessary to direct their attention to what was essential in a religion and put an end to all acrimony and animosity. This work Aśoka entrusted to the Dharma-Mahāmātras, who were occupied with all sects

that flourished in his wide empire, above all, the Buddhists, the Ājīvikas and Nirgranthas. Thereby Aśoka hoped that every sect would exalt itself and that Dhaṁma would shine more brightly. This was one of the most important duties which the Dharma-Mahāmātras were commissioned to discharge in connection with Dhaṁma. There was also another duty assigned to them. It was connected with the organisation of charities. But we cannot have a good idea of the nature of this duty unless we take note of the fourth measure which Aśoka employed for the development of Dhaṁma.

Those who have studied the Aśoka inscriptions cannot fail to notice the fact that he is very fond of enumerating the philanthropical works he has instituted. The motive, however, is not self-adulation or self-advertisement. This is clear from the following from Pillar Edict VII:

"On the roads I have planted the banyan trees. They will offer shade to man and beast. I have grown mango orchards. I have caused wells to be dug at every eight *koses*, and I have had rest-houses. I have made many watering sheds at different places for the enjoyment of man and beast. This (provision) of enjoyment, however, is, indeed a trifle, because mankind has been blessed with many blessings by the previous kings as by me. *But I have done this with the*

intent that men may follow the practices of Dhamma." Aśoka thus candidly confesses that the provision of the various kinds of enjoyment which he has made for man and beast is not something which he alone has done, but is a duty which even kings preceding him have performed. Why then, it may be asked, does he notify his works of charity? He himself gives the reply to it. He says, he has done so, because others may follow his example. There can be no doubt that this was the real motive of Aśoka. For a little further on in the same edict, he says precisely the same thing. "Whatever charitable works I have performed," says he, "these have been conformed to among men, and these they will perform (in future)." But Aśoka did not stop here. He wished that in his philanthropic activity the members of his royal family should associate themselves and heartily co-operate. And he, therefore, instructed the Dharma-Mahāmātras and other head officers to approach them and elicit money grants for charitable purposes. "These (that is, the Dharma-Mahāmātras) and many other head officials are employed in the distribution of bounties, both my own and those of the Queens; and in all my gynæceum both here (that is, in Pāṭaliputra) and in the provinces, they put forth various satisfactory efforts, and in manifold ways. And I have arranged that they shall be occupied

with the distribution of the bounties of my sons and other sons of queens." It will thus be seen that Aśoka was not content with the philanthropic activity he personally displayed, but made every endeavour through the Dharma-Mahāmātras and other officials to induce his near relatives also to follow in his footsteps. Who the 'other head officials' were we do not know. But certain it is that the Dharma-Mahāmātras were entrusted with the mission of educing charities not only from the king's relatives but also from other people. For Rock Edict V. not only repeats what Pillar Edict VII. states about the duty of the Dharma-Mahāmātras in connection with the members of the royal household, but also adds that they were to concern themselves with everybody, in fact, that may be found to be "leaning on Dhaṁma, to be an abode of Dhaṁma or to be given up to alms-giving." It no doubt looks singular that Aśoka should lay so much stress on the performance of charities by all people, big or small, rich or poor. Of course, as king it was his duty to institute works of public weal and utility. But he unmistakably gives us to understand that he did it all in order that the people might follow his example. He is also anxious that his relatives should similarly perform acts of charity apparently with the object of not only incurring spiritual merit but also setting an example to the people

in general. It therefore looks singular that Aśoka should attach so much importance to the performance of charitable works. And it may naturally be asked whether Buddhism lays any stress on any works of public benevolence such as those referred to by Aśoka. The following text from the Saṁyutta-Nikāya[1] will clear up the point:

Planters of groves.

Say of what folk by day and night
For ever doth the merit grow?
In righteousness and virtuous might
What folk from earth to heaven go?

Planters of groves and fruitful trees,
And they who build causeway and dam,
And wells construct and watering-sheds
And (to the homeless) shelter give:—
Of such as these by day and night
For ever doth the merit grow.
In righteousness and virtue's might
Such folk from earth to heaven go.

There is still one other measure which Aśoka seems to have undertaken for the promotion and diffusion of Dhaṁma. In Pillar Edict VII. he adverts to the erection of *Dhaṁma-thaṁbhas* or columns of Dhaṁma side by side with *Dhaṁma-sāvanas* and Dharma-Mahāmātras. By columns of Dhaṁma we are, of course, to understand

[1] I. 5. 7; also Eng. trans. by Mrs. Rhys Davids, pp. 45-6.

the *Dhaṁma-lipis* engraved on them. And to these must also be added those incised on rocks, which, as they were inscribed later than the Pillar Edicts could not have been referred to in the latter. In fact, we have to understand all the *Dhaṁma-lipis* that have been engraved by Aśoka. But it may be asked what part exactly the inscribing of these *Dhaṁma-lipis* played in the promotion of Dhaṁma. Some scholars are of opinion that Aśoka engraved them in order that his name might be preserved for ever. In other words, they believe that megalomania was the motive that lurked behind it. But nothing is more erroneous. Many a time both in the Rock and the Pillar Edicts he distinctly tells us that his one object in setting up the *Dhaṁma-lipis* in the lithic form was that they might endure for long, and that his second and principal object was that his descendants might follow in his footsteps for the promotion of the temporal and spiritual good of the people. Anybody who carefully reads the closing parts of Rock Edicts IV., V. and VI. and Pillar Edict VII. will be convinced as to the real motive of Aśoka in inscribing his *Dhaṁma-lipi* on stone. Aśoka's object unquestionably was, as he has told us, that if they remained in a durable form, his successors, whatever the fate of the royal archives may be, would be able to see from these lithic records what he did for the promotion of

Dhaṁma, and emulate, if not outvie, him in the noble duty of promoting Dhaṁma. In other words, he was so inordinately fond of Dhaṁma that he took what he thought to be the best step in order that his work might be known to and continued by his descendants.

We can never be in a position to form an accurate estimate of Aśoka's work as a missionary unless we also take into account what he did for the weal and happiness of the animate world. It deserves to be noticed that as king, Aśoka thought he had a duty to perform not simply to human beings but also to creatures in general. And it is therefore necessary to see what measures he adopted to preserve the life and promote the happiness of creatures. His work under this head falls into two sections: (1) the means he took to prevent not only injury to, but also killing of, living beings, and (2) the steps he adopted to increase their physical happiness. In regard to the first matter, Pillar Edict V. gives us much information. There Aśoka tells us what restrictions he has imposed upon the infliction of injury and destruction of life. In the first place, he lays an embargo on the killing of any living being that is neither eaten nor required for any decorative or medicinal purpose. In other words, he puts a stop to wanton destruction of life, and goes even to the length of ordering that chaff containing life shall not be

burnt. In the case of animals that serve as food or are used for domestic and other purposes, he lays down that they shall not be killed, and shall not be injured by branding or castration on certain auspicious days that he specifies. At first sight, it no doubt appears that these restrictions were of Aśoka's creation. But similar restrictions have been recommended in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra. Thus Chapter XLIII.[1] of this work lays down that all *vihāra* or pleasaunce birds and all auspicious creatures, whether birds or beasts, shall be protected from destruction or molestation. The list of the garden birds given there includes at least four mentioned by Aśoka as unworthy of being killed. Again, Chapter CLXXII. of this work[2] says that the king shall order non-slaughter of animals and prohibit castration and destruction of fœtus in the womb on certain auspicious days which practically agree with those mentioned by Aśoka. These restrictions did not therefore originate with him, but he was simply giving effect to those comprised in the Arthaśāstra. And all that we can here say is that he must have spared no pains to carry them out thoroughly. But howsoever thoroughly he may have carried out the measures, they could not have amounted to much. Aśoka himself admits that in Pillar Edict VII.. He says that he

[1] *Arthaśāstra*, p. 122. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 407.

was not able to produce much beneficial result by imposing such restrictions and declaring certain species of creatures exempt from butchery, but that he gained his object by *nijhati*, that is, general arrest of animal carnage. With this object in view he commanded his missionary officers, while preaching Dhaṁma to the people, to impress on their mind the necessity of *anāraṁbho prāṇānaṁ* and *avihisā bhūtānam*. Aśoka has thus proceeded one step further, as he wants now not merely to curtail injury and slaughter of life but to prevent it altogether, if he can. And, as might be expected of him, he himself sets an example to the people in this respect. The first chapter describes the course of conduct which he was pursuing, like most kings prior to him, to make himself popular with the people. We know that he was in the habit of celebrating Samājas, some of which entertained them with shows, music and dancing, and some regaled them with meat and drink. In Samājas of the second kind, many animals must have been killed to serve meat to the large masses that came for the feast. Aśoka was also observing, as we have seen, the time-honoured custom of doling out meat to the people every day in his palace, for which, he tells us, hundreds of thousands of animals had to be slain every day in the royal kitchen. Animals required for the

Samāja or for charity were doubtless butchered for the purposes of eating, and their slaughter could not be prohibited by any of the restrictions specified in Pillar Edict V. But when Aśoka embarked on the programme of the *nijhati* or stoppage of animal carnage, he was not satisfied with merely preaching it to the people but set them an example by himself putting it into practice so far as his royal household was concerned. But he did not stop there. For he did not spare even himself, and we are aware of what restrictions he placed on the meat served at his own table and how finally he gave up eating meat altogether, even the flesh of a pea-fowl which was considered to be such a delicacy by the people of the Middle Country. But these measures, we have to remember, were aimed at preventing injury and slaughter of creatures in general, and were not intended to promote their physical happiness. This object he endeavoured to realise by other means. And we know what these means were. These were the measures he adopted for the enjoyment of life not by man only but also by beast, and constitute the charitable works executed by the king. They have been described in Pillar Edict VII., and we have seen what they are. Practically the same philanthropic works have been enumerated in Rock Edict II. But the latter mentions one work which is

of great importance and which is not referred to in the former. Here Aśoka says that he has established two kinds of *chikitsā* or curative arrangements, one relating to men and the other to animals. How he carried out this object he describes as follows: "Where medicinal herbs, wholesome for men and wholesome for animals, are not found, they have everywhere been imported and planted. Roots and fruits, wherever they are not found, have been imported and planted." What causes our extreme admiration for the king is that he carried out this work not only in his dominions but also those of the neighbouring kings, practically the same that have been mentioned in Rock Edict XIII., and we have seen who they were.

What was the upshot of Aśoka's missionary activity? It was not simply within the boundaries of his own empire, extensive as it was, but also in the realms of the independent neighbouring kings that Aśoka claims to have spread his Dhaṁma. In Rock Edict XIII. where he addresses himself to his sons and grandsons, the Buddhist monarch says: "But this conquest is considered to be the chiefest by the Beloved of the gods, which is conquest through Dhaṁma. And that, again, has been achieved by the Beloved of the gods here and in the bordering dominions, even as far as six hundred *yojanas*." Aśoka thus clearly tells us that

conquests by Dhaṁma he effected not only throughout his empire but also in the adjoining kingdoms. In regard to the former he makes a specific mention of the different frontier countries which were incorporated in his empire and were also the spheres of his missionary activity. In regard to the bordering dominions he mentions not only the independent kingdoms in the southernmost part of India but also those of the five Greek kings. We have thus to note here the wide range over which Aśoka says that his Dhaṁma had spread. It had been disseminated not only over the whole of India and Ceylon but also over those parts of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Epirus and Cyrene, which were subject to the Greek rulers. But this was not all. For in the same edict the king further tells us: "Even where the envoys of the Beloved of the gods do not go, they, having heard the utterances of Dhaṁma, the ordinances, and the teaching of Dhaṁma by the Beloved of the gods, practise Dhaṁma and will so practise." This may refer to his religious propaganda in China and Burma.

If we take into consideration the well-planned programme and the systematic efforts which Aśoka put forth to carry it through, the statements contained in Rock Edict XIII. in respect of the extent of his missionary operations are by no means unworthy of credence.

Some scholars, however, are prone to cast a doubt on them and hold that Buddhism in Aśoka's time had not gone beyond the confines of India. The most pre-eminent of them is Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids. In regard to the statement of the propagation of Dhaṁma by Aśoka in this edict, the Pāli scholar says: "It is difficult to say how much of this is mere royal rhodomontade. It is quite likely that the Greek kings are only thrown in by way of make-weight, as it were; and that no emissary had actually been sent there at all. Even had they been sent, there is little reason to believe that the Greek self-complacency would have been much disturbed. Aśoka's estimation of the results obtained is better evidence of his own vanity than it is of Greek docility. We may imagine the Greek amusement at the absurd idea of a 'barbarian' teaching them their duty; but we can scarcely imagine them discarding their gods and their superstitions at the bidding of an alien king."[1] Here Prof. Rhys Davids supposes that Aśoka sent envoys to the Greek kings in order to spread Buddhism. But this is a mere assumption. What in all probability we have to understand from Rock Edict XIII. is that Aśoka was already in the habit of sending ambassadors to the Greek courts, but that he now seized the opportunity

[1] *Buddhist India*, pp. 298-9.

of propagating his faith through these officers of his in the Greek kingdoms just as he did in his own empire through his own officers. The Seleukidan monarchy, we know, sent two ambassadors one after another to the Mauryan court. Ptolemy Philadelphos, the ruler of Egypt, also dispatched an envoy to this Indian court. If this was so, it is perfectly plausible that the Mauryan monarchy also must have sent emissaries in return to the Greek courts since the time of Chandragupta. And as one of the most effective methods adopted by Aśoka for the dissemination of Buddhism was the employment of the higher order of his officials for preaching that faith, it is but natural to expect him to follow precisely the same method even in regard to the Greek dominions, where also his officials, the emissaries, were working. Prof. Rhys Davids further thinks that even supposing for the moment that Aśoka's ambassadors undertook the mission work also, they could not have secured many converts from among the Greeks, because the Greeks were too self-complacent to give much heed to the preachings of the 'barbarians' and discard their gods and superstitions. Here also the Pāli scholar assumes that Aśoka made many converts of the Greeks. All that the Buddhist king says is that he propagated his religion in the Greek kingdoms. This does not necessarily

mean that he succeeded in converting the Greeks, but only the people of these kingdoms, who must have consisted of many men who were not Greeks. Why, again, this incapacity of the Greeks to adopt other religions? Their attitude towards the faiths of the 'barbarians' inferior to them in civilisation, is, of course, intelligible enough. But why suppose that they were intellectually perverse and impervious to the religious influences of a people by no means their inferiors in culture? Do we not for instance know that the Greeks or Yavanas, who came in contact with Indian civilisation had become converts to Buddhism and other Indian faiths? [1] There are many references to them in literature and epigraphic records. Again, Ptolemy Philadelphos of Egypt was the founder or expander of the Alexandrian Library, and we know on the authority of Epiphanius [2] that his librarian was anxious to translate the books of the Hindus. The Greeks were certainly not such cultural obstinates, as some of their modern admirers take them to be.

Prof. Rhys Davids thinks that the story of the spread of Buddhism in Aśoka's time is better preserved in the Sinhalese chronicles than in his edicts. The former give an account of the missions sent out by Tissa, the son of Moggali,

[1] I.A., 1911, pp. 11-3.

[2] Epiphan. *de Mens. et Pond.* 9.

to the various parts of India. Each mission consisted of a leader and his four assistants. "And when we find," says the Pāli scholar, "that they ascribe the sending out of the missionaries, not to Aśoka, but to the leaders of the Order, and that they make no mention of any such missions to the Greek kingdoms in the West, it is at least probable that the view they take is more accurate, in these respects, than the official proclamation."[1] In other words, what Prof. Rhys Davids means is that Buddhism could not have extended to the Greek dominions on account of the self-complacent, self-opinionative cast of the Greek mind, and that as the Sinhalese chronicles speak of the Buddhist faith being preached in Aśoka's time only in the bordering regions of India, that must be accepted as more probable and more accurate. And as the chronicles, again, attribute the dispatch of the missionaries, not to Aśoka, but to the leader of the Buddhist Order, the assertion of Aśoka that he disseminated Buddhism in the allied kingdoms of the Greeks or even that he was successful in spreading it in India at all is pure royal rhodomontade and must be ascribed to his vanity. The implicit faith that he reposes in the Sinhalese chronicles, he thinks, is warranted by the genuine scraps of history preserved and

[1] *Buddhist India*, pp. 301-2.

put down for us by the Ceylon monks. And Prof. Rhys Davids tries to show how this remark holds good, in particular, in the case of the tradition chronicled by them in respect of these missions. He says that three of the missionaries sent to the Himālayan region to teach the doctrine were Majjhima, Kassapa-gotta and Dundubhissara. Who would not have supposed that the chronicles had drawn upon their imagination for this detail? Yet, in the Topes opened by Cunningham at and near Sāñchi, he found some relic caskets with inscriptions on them containing these names and informing us that the last two of these monks were connected with the Himālayan missions. This is a clear proof, the Pāli scholar thinks, that the Sinhalese monks had correctly handed down, in unbroken tradition, what had happened in Aśoka's time in regard to the propagation of Buddhism. Now, the Dīpavaṁsa gives five names including that of Majjhima, but the Mahāvaṁsa tells us that the mission was headed by Majjhima. In the inscriptions on the Sāñchi relic caskets, the name of Majjhima, no doubt, occurs, but the person who is spoken of as the teacher of the Himālayan countries is not Majjhima at all, but Gotiputa Kasapa-gota. These inscriptions, again, associate no less than nine monks with Kasapa-gota, the Himālayan teacher, two of whom alone agree with those given by the

Dīpavaṁsa. Why do the Sāñchi inscriptions omit the other two mentioned by the Dīpavaṁsa, or why does the latter ignore the remaining seven named by the former? How therefore the Ceylon Chronicles can be credited with historical fidelity and accuracy so far as this account of the mission is concerned is by no means clear to us. Can this account, again, stand the test of critical reasoning? The Chronicles tell us that four of the apostles sent were Rakkhita, Dhaṁmarakkhita, Mahādhaṁmarakkhita, and Mahārakkhita. Is not this similarity of name in the case of no less than four persons enough to cast strong suspicion on the account? The same similarity of name is perceptible also in the case of the two monks, Majjhima and Majjhantika. Again, the duumvirate, Sona and Uttara, who went to Suvarṇabhūmi, on mission, are believed by scholars to represent one single individual. It has thus been rightly thought[1] that as historical document this account must be handled with great caution. Under such circumstances to maintain that the Sinhalese Chronicles have preserved a more reliable account of the Buddhist missions than the Aśoka edicts is "a speculation too bold to follow."

It is not in one place only that Aśoka refers to the dominions of the Greek kings. It is not

[1] Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 117.

simply in the account of his religious propaganda to the distant countries that he speaks of them. These princes have also been referred to by him in another place. In Rock Edict II., he adverts to the curative arrangements established by him for the good of the man and the beast and the consequent importation and plantation of medicinal herbs at places where they were unknown. This philanthropic work, he says, he carried out not only in his own empire but also in the Greek kingdoms. Are we therefore to say that in both the cases Aśoka has stated what is not a fact? This would be charging him with downright fabrications,—a conclusion which no sane person will accept. What is, however, possible is that he may have exaggerated the results actually achieved. But no unbiassed person can reasonably doubt, when he tells us, that he carried on his propaganda work through his own officials and that he did so not only in his own territory but also in the foreign countries. It may however be asked and rightly asked whether his missionary activities had produced any lasting effect in those quarters. We have therefore to consider here how far Aśoka's mission was successful in the Greek territories.

It is a noteworthy fact that Buddhism and Christianity possess many important features in common, and that their agreement cannot

be ascribed to mere chance. Here we cannot do better than summarise the contents of an illuminating lecture delivered by F. Max Müller nearly twenty-five years ago. He said that two Roman Catholic missionaries travelling in Tibet were startled at the coincidence between their own ritual and that of the Buddhist priesthood. They attributed the coincidence to the Devil. But if a coincidence can be produced by natural causes, no other explanation need be sought. And it was an historical fact that Christian missionaries were active in China from the middle of the seventh to the end of the eighth century. Here then was the coincidence explained in a fairly satisfactory manner. There were other coincidences, however, between Buddhism and Christianity which belong to the ancient period of the former. They included confessions, fasting, celibacy of the priesthood, and even rosaries, and, as they were honoured in India before the beginning of the Christian era, it followed that if they had been borrowed, the borrowers were the Christians. If such coincidences could be accounted for by reference to the tendency of our common humanity, let analogous cases be produced. If they were set down as merely accidental, let similar cases be brought from the chapter of accidents. Max Müller's own opinion was that at least they were too numerous and complex to be attributed to the latter cause.

How, it may be asked, had knowledge of these things been spread?[1] Of course, Indian influences had long been suspected in the Æsopian fables and some parts of the Bible. When this exchange of thought was going on between the east and the west from times immemorial, are we to suppose that the main ideas of Buddha's religion alone should remain unknown in the west? The Buddhist books, however, nowhere say that Buddhism was preached by the monks in those regions. On the other hand, we know, as Aśoka distinctly tells us, that he had employed his official legations to the courts of his contemporary Greek princes as much to propagate Buddha's Dhaṁma as to carry out his humanitarian purposes. Can there be the slightest doubt that the spread of Buddhism to Western Asia was due to Aśoka's missionary activities? Because Buddhism has thus influenced Christianity, it does not, however, follow that the latter is only a deteriorated form of the former. This by no means deprives Christianity of its claim to originality, beauty and truth. As Dr. Paul Carus tells us, "none of the elements of Christianity is radically new, nevertheless, the whole in its peculiar combination is decidedly original and marks the beginning of an era which, at least in the west, stands in strong contrast to all the ages past."[2]

[1] *Jour. Maha-Bodhi Soc.*, V, 4.

[2] *Buddhism and its Christian Critics*, pp. 215-6.

Christianity, again, was perhaps not the only religion though that was the most important religion in Western Asia, on which the influence of Buddhism was incontrovertible. There must have been some other religious sects which were similarly influenced. One such sect is that of the Essenes, whose clergy formed a small monastic Jewish order with their quaint semi-ascetic practices and lived on the shores of the Dead Sea. And it has long since been admitted by scholars that they were indebted to Buddhism for some of their important characteristics.[1] It has also been admitted that the Essenes were in existence even before the rise of Christianity. A similar religious confraternity is the Therapeutæ who were residing in the neighbourhood of Alexandria and formed another order of the pre-Christian Judaism. Even here the influence of Buddhism has been recognised in their precepts and modes of life.[2] The Buddhist influence on the religious condition of Western Asia is thus traceable prior to the first century A.D., and must undoubtedly have been caused by the missionary zeal and activity of Aśoka in those regions.

Of course, when we say that Aśoka propagated Dhamma through his officials both in his empire and outside, both in India and Western

[1] E.R.E., V. 401.

[2] *Ibid.*, XII, 318-9.

Asia, that does not mean that the Buddhist monks themselves did nothing for the spread of their religion. As both the Dīpavaṁsa and Mahāvaṁsa inform us that Moggaliputta Tissa dispatched missionary monks to the different parts of India, we have to take it that the Buddhist clergy also in Aśoka's time adopted some measures of their own for the dissemination of their faith. But as we have seen, we have to use their account with caution. What, in all likelihood, the clergy did was that they dispatched at least two parties, one to the Himālayan regions and the other to West India. The first party was headed not by Majjhima, but by Gotiputa Kasapa-gota. And these Himālayan regions included Kashmir and Gandhāra. Thus Majjhaṁtika, said to have been dispatched separately to these provinces, becomes identical with Majjhima. What probably happened was that the party headed by Gotiputa Kasapa-gota included Majjhima and that the former put the latter in charge of these two provinces for missionary purposes. Similarly, Rakkhita, Dhaṁmarakkhita, Mahādhaṁmarakkhita, and Mahārakkita are not four separate names, as the Sinhalese chronicles lead us to infer. They, in all likelihood, denoted one individual, who was dispatched to Western India, comprising Vanavāsī, Aparānta, Mahāraṭṭha and Yonaloka. Two more missions seem to have been similarly sent

out,—one to Suvarṇabhūmi and the other to Laṅkā or Ceylon. For these missions Moggaliputta Tissa was perhaps responsible, but they had nothing to do with the measures which Aśoka adopted with the same object in view. The latter had the whole machinery and finances of his imperial government to help him to push forward his Dhaṁma, and when, as we find, he hit upon the novel but effective method of requisitioning the whole hierarchy of officials as his proselytising agents, naturally we must expect far more real, rapid and extensive results. And if we bear in mind that the Buddhist clergy also put forth effort more or less strenuously in the same direction, it is no wonder if the convergent activities of both were crowned with phenomenal success. For do we not find Buddhism suddenly spread over a very wide area from about the middle of the third century B.C. onwards and studding the various parts of India and Afghanistan with religious edifices, such as *Stūpas*, monasteries, and caves? The Buddhist faith occupies such a preponderant position during this period that it practically puts all other religions in the background, very few vestiges of which are found, pertaining to architecture or literature. But by far the greater portion of the credit must go to the Buddhist Emperor, the Prophet of the third century B.C.

CHAPTER VI.

Social and Religious Life from Aśokan Monuments.

It is not possible to obtain a clear picture of Aśoka and his achievements unless we consider the social and religious environments in which he worked. Here too it must be borne in mind that this chapter cannot give the whole picture. Our object is merely to show what light is thrown upon this subject by the lithic records of Aśoka and make it clearer and brighter with the help of extraneous sources only where this is absolutely necessary.

We will first make an attempt to glean whatever information we can of the religious life of India. We have seen that among the practices of Dhaṁma which Aśoka inculcates on the minds of his people he makes mention of the seemly behaviour to be shown towards 'Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas.' The meaning of this expression has not been clearly understood. It has been taken to denote vaguely 'the Brāhmaṇas and the ascetics' or 'the Brāhmaṇas and the recluses.' The same phrase occurs in the Pāli literature, for instance, in the *Mahā-parinibbānasutta*,

where Prof. Rhys Davids translates it by "the Brāhmaṇs by saintliness of life."[1] It is, however, a *Dvandva* and not a *Karmadhāraya* compound, and must be taken to denote "the Brāhmaṇas and the Śramaṇas." In all the Pāli scriptures of the Buddhists, wherever Brāhmaṇs are mentioned side by side with the Śramaṇas, both are held up as objects of the highest but equal sanctification and veneration.[2] They therefore denote two orders of religieux but of opposite character. The Brāhmaṇs seem to be recluses and mendicants whose speculations and disciplines were in conformity with the Vedas, and Śramaṇas those whose doctrines and practices were opposed to these Brahmanic scriptures. Members of both the orders, in spite of their divergent tenets and disciplines, might lead equally holy lives and might thus be entitled to equal reverence from the people in general. This is just the reason why the Brāhmaṇ religieux were shown as much respect as the Śramaṇas in Buddha's time, and this is also the reason why Aśoka himself shows the same degree of reverence to both and insists upon his people also doing the same.

Pillar Edict VII. specifies three religious sects, namely the Saṁgha, the Brāhmaṇa Ājīvikas, and the Nigaṁṭhas. It is worthy of note

[1] SBE., XI. 105, n. 1.
[2] IA., 1891, p. 263.

in this connection that Aśoka says that there were other sects besides these but that as he does not mention them and names these three, it is plain that in his time those were the only sects that were considered most important. Of the three mentioned by him, Saṁgha, of course, must here denote the Buddhist fraternity, and as Aśoka was himself a follower of their religion, he naturally makes mention of it first and also by this name. We know nothing of the special features, except one, of the Buddhism which was prevalent in Aśoka's time. The exception is the mention of Konākamana Buddha in the Niglīva Pillar Inscription. In this record Aśoka says that he enlarged the *Stūpa* of this Buddha for the second time when he visited the place in person in the twentieth year of his reign. It is clear from this that already in Aśoka's time the cult of the former Buddhas had come to be foisted on the religion of Gautama. Nigaṁṭhas are the same as the Nirgranthas, the followers of Mahāvīra, that is, the members of the Jaina order. There thus remain the Ājīvikas,[1] who curiously enough have been called Brāhmaṇa. What that exactly means we do

[1] JDL., II. 1-80 contains a learned article on the *Ājīvikas* by Dr. Benimadhav Barua, which contains all that is known about them from the various sources. The inference, however, that there were at least two sects of Ājīvikas is entirely mine, and is stated in this chapter for what it is worth.

not know. What, however, appears is that there were two orders of Ājīvikas, one Brahmanical, and the other non-Brāhmanical. The non-Brahmanical Ājīvikas were probably those who were associated and even connected with the Jainas, and the other order was probably represented by the Maskarins or Parivrājakas referred to by Pāṇini and Patañjali. It may be interesting to see whether these two fraternities of the Ājīvikas can be distinguished one from the other in regard to their doctrines and practices which at present seem to have been hopelessly mixed up. To take only one instance, one Buddhist authority says that the Ājīvikas ate fish, and this does not agree with the extreme solicitude for life with which they are credited by another Buddhist text. If again, they did not believe in the efficacy of *Kaṁma* as some Buddhist Suttas tell us, how could they bring themselves to practise religious austerities of the most rigorous type as other Suttas report about them? There is in all likelihood a hopeless medley of contrary doctrines and practices here which can only clear themselves up when an attempt is made to assort them to the proper Ājīvika orders. What we have to note here is that if there were two Ājīvika sects, the Ājīvikas of the Brāhmaṇ order were more important than the other, and represent probably the Ājīvikas for whom Aśoka excavated the rock caves at Barābar. Another

point to note is that here Aśoka himself is telling us what he meant by the phrase *Brāhmaṇa-śramaṇa* referred to above. The Saṁgha of Aśoka and the Nirgranthas represented the Śramaṇa, and the Ājīvikas the Brāhmaṇ, order of the religieux.

The word used by Aśoka to denote these religious orders is *pāsaṁḍa.* This has been taken to be equivalent to the Sanskrit *pāshaṇḍa,* which, even in his time as is evident from Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, denoted 'a heretic.' This is not, however, the sense in which Aśoka employs the word, for even his own Saṁgha is called *pāsaṁḍa* by him. It must also be remembered that in the Rock Edicts where this term is found the Shāhbāzgaṛhī and Mānsherā versions give almost invariably *prashaḍa* for *pāsaṁḍa* of the other copies. This points to a Sanskrit equivalent different from *pāshaṇḍa,* and corresponding rather to *pārshada,* that is, a member of a *parshad.* In Classical Sanskrit, however, *parshad* signifies 'a religious synod or assembly.' This no doubt comes close to, but has not exactly the sense of, Aśoka's *pāsaṁḍa.* It is quite possible that in Aśoka's time this Sanskrit word may have had precisely this sense. The *pāsaṁḍas* or religious orders were each divided into two sections : (1) *pravrajita* or recluses and (2) *grihasthas* or householders. Aśoka twice refers to these sections, once in Rock

Edict XII. and another time in Pillar Edict VII.

Connected with the Pāsaṁḍas is the term *Dhaṁma*, which it is impossible to translate by one English word. We have seen what Aśoka understood by Dhaṁma. It denoted with him a code of moral duties, and, as he was a Buddhist layman, naturally it consisted just of those duties which Buddhism has prescribed for a householder. It must, however, be borne in mind that he was not at all unaware that practically the same duties were inculcated by other Pāsaṁḍas also. It has been shown above that in Rock Edict XIII. Aśoka admits that the ethical practices on which he insists under the name Dhaṁma are something which all Pāsaṁḍas, whether of the Brāhmaṇ or the Śramaṇa order, teach in common. In other words, practically the same Dhaṁma is attributed by him to all sects. And this is just the reason why in Rock Edict VII. he says that "all sects may dwell at all places (in his kingdom), because they all aim at self-restraint and purification of heart," and in Rock Edict XII. that people should hear Dhaṁma from one another's mouth in order that its *sāra* or essence may grow. What deserves to be noticed here is that certain righteous qualities and practices were preached by all sects in common and constituted Dhaṁma according to them. The

words of Prof. Rhys Davids are worth quoting in this connection. "Dhaṁma has been rendered Law. But it never has any one of the various senses attached to the word 'law' in English. It means rather, when used in this connection, that which it is 'good form' to do in accord with established custom. So it never means exactly religion, but rather, when used in that connection, what it behoves a man of right feeling to do—or, on the other hand, what a man of sense will naturally hold. It lies quite apart from all questions either of ritual or theology."[1] This is the reason why in Minor Rock Edict II. where Aśoka specifies his moral duties as elsewhere, he winds up by saying that they form *porāṇā pakiti dighāvuse*, 'the natural constitution (of man) which is ancient and long-enduring.' Prof. Jolly takes us one step further when he says that Dharma "is one of the most comprehensive and important terms in the whole range of Sanskrit literature. Indian commentators have explained it as denoting an act which produces the quality of the soul called *apūrva*, the cause of heavenly bliss and of final liberation."[2] Dhaṁma thus denotes any act in accord with established custom, which a man of right feeling will naturally do and which, further, is the cause of heavenly

[1] *Buddhist India*, 292.
[2] ERE., IV. 702.

bliss. This is also just what Aśoka means, for in Rock Edict IX. he clearly says: "Every worldly rite is of a dubious nature. It may or may not accomplish its object. *Dhaṁma-maṁgala*, however, is not conditioned by time, and even though it may not achieve any object here, it begets endless merit (*puṇya*) in the next world."

The above connotation of the word *dhaṁma* gives rise to a big question. For it means that a righteous act is efficacious in itself and is capable of giving heavenly felicity without the intervention or mediation of any god. This is just the reason why Smith describes Aśoka's Dhaṁma as a system of theocracy without a god.[1] But what he has said holds good not only in the case of Aśoka's Dhaṁma but also of the Dhaṁma of most of the Pāshaṁḍas of his period. Up till the time of that monarch, belief in the doctrine of *karma* was rampant. The ordinary people were content with the perform-ance of virtuous deeds and with the hope of being born one god or another in their next life as the effect of their *karma*, as the reward of their righteous practices in this world. The destruction of *karma* and of the consequent re-birth was reserved for and was attempted by recluses and mendicants, whether Brāhmaṇs or

[1] *Asoka*, pp. 33-4.

Śramaṇas. And consequently there was no necessity of any belief in a living, personal god. From the fifth century B. C. onwards to the time of Aśoka, school after school and sect after sect arose with its peculiar doctrine about the emancipation of the individual soul. But all except one or two were taken away by the fascinating theory of *karma* and maintained that action alone led to the individual beatitude. Such was Buddhism, such was Ājīvikism, such was Jainism, such was, in fact, every sect except the Bhaktimārga, which however was not obsessed by the doctrine of *karma* to any large extent and laid down that devotion to the supreme soul alone could give salvation. The Bhakti sect however was not much in evidence up to this time and began to acquire prominence soon after Aśoka. And, as a matter of fact, it then came so much to the forefront that it left an impress of *bhakti* on that very Buddhism which was so much and so long in the ascendant.

There is yet another element of the popular faith to which Aśoka refers in one of his Rock Edicts. It is true that the Hindu Society was so much permeated by the doctrine of *karma* that the performance of action alone was considered to be important and efficacious and that very little thought was given to the worship of, and communion with, a personal god. But this was true only so far as the future life was

concerned. What about the present life? It is inconceivable that the people of ancient India could be so philosophic and unworldly as not to care for earthly pleasures and joys. In Rock Edict IX., Aśoka says: "People perform various (lucky) rites in sicknesses, at marriages, on the birth of sons, and on journey. On these and other similar occasions people perform various rites. In this matter, however, womankind performs much, manifold, (but) trivial, useless rite." This throws light on another phase of popular belief in Aśoka's time and points to the continuance of the worship of Yakshas, Chaityas, Gandharvas, Nāgas and so forth about which we read so much in the Buddhist Pāli scriptures. And further it may not be impossible to prove from these Buddhist texts that Aśoka is right in saying that such auspicious rites womanfolk was inordinately fond of performing. Aśoka's attitude towards this trait of popular faith was by no means hostile. "Lucky rites," says he, "should undoubtedly be performed. But a rite of this kind bears little fruit." And it is in this connection that he compares such rites to the *Dhaṁma-maṅgala*, and says that whereas the former are of dubious efficacy even so far as this world is concerned, the latter is unconditioned by time and unerringly engenders infinite merit (*puṇya*) at least in the next world.

About social life also interesting information can be gleaned from Aśoka's inscriptions. One of the most important items connected with the Hindu social life is the consideration of the food allowed or disallowed by the Śāstras. We know that in Pillar Edict V. Aśoka specifies some classes of animals, birds, and fishes whose slaughter he prohibits. Some of the names mentioned there cannot be identified, but a good many of them are known. In regard to them Aśoka expressly says that they are the creatures which are neither eaten nor put to any use. What he exactly means by the second part of his statement is not quite clear. But there can be little doubt that he is here referring to those creatures, which, though they are not required for food, have yet to be killed for medicinal and decorative purposes. Now if we compare Aśoka's list of such creatures, with those which the Dharmasūtras or Dharma-saṁhitās sanction or forbid for food or killing, we obtain most curious results. Of course, we do find some which are tabooed both by Aśoka and the Dharma-śāstras. Such are the *śuka* (parrots), *sārikā* (starlings), *chakravāka* (Brahmani ducks), and *haṁsa* (geese).[1] But there are others which were forbidden in Aśoka's time

[1] See in this connection the most scholarly monograph of Manomohon Chakravarti on *Animals in the Inscriptions of Piyadasi* (MASB., Vol. I., no. 17).

but allowed by the Smṛiti authors. Here again we have to distinguish between two classes according as they are allowed by all or some Smṛitikāras. Of the former class are *kaphaṭa* and *duḍi* or male and female tortoises and *sayaka* or porcupine which have been permitted by all Smṛitis but tabooed by Aśoka. Of the latter class only one instance is furnished, namely, *palasate* or rhinoceros, which is forbidden by Aśoka but allowed by Yājñavalkya, Gautama, Manu and Āpastamba, and disputed by Vasishṭha and Baudhāyana. We are not here entering into any minute details which can be best treated at length elsewhere. But we cannot ignore one interesting point in this connection. What we have so far considered is a list of creatures which are altogether exempted by Aśoka from slaughter but which have been partially or fully allowed by the Smṛitis for food. But there is one animate being which has been forbidden by most of the Smṛitis but served as an article of food in the time of Aśoka. This, of course, is the *mora* or peacock whose flesh was much relished by the people of the Madhyadeśa and which continued to be killed for the royal table for a long time though Aśoka had already embarked himself on the practical programme of preserving all animate beings.[1] But

[1] *Above*, p. 16.

all the Dharma-śāstras except one lay down a penance for the killing of a peacock.

The object of this chapter is not to enter into any discussion about the age and the present structure of the different Dharma-śāstras. But as Aśoka's pillars which contain the edict have all been found in Madhyadeśa, it follows that the items it supplies in regard to food allowed or forbidden must be taken as applying to that country. Of the Dharmasūtras, Baudhāyana and Vasishṭha are looked upon as embodying the practices of Āryāvarta or Madhyadeśa. But while the former[1] lays down that the customs of the north should be followed in North India and those of the South in South India, the latter[2] insists upon the practices approved of in the Āryāvarta being everywhere acknowledged as authoritative. This agrees with the fact that the flesh of the peacock was disapproved by all Smṛitis, but not by Baudhāyana and Vasishṭha and that they pertained to the Madhyadeśa. Now, what we have to note about India is that owing to the ever-increasing influence of Buddhism and Jainism there was an ever-growing tendency towards vegetarianism and that consequently foods originally permitted might in a succeeding age be disallowed, but those originally tabooed could

[1] I. 1. 2. 1-6.
[2] I. 10.

not subsequently be allowed. Both Baudhāyana and Vasiṣṭha allow the eating of the five-toed animals, the porcupine and the tortoise, but say that there is some doubt about the rhinoceros. But in Aśoka's time not only the rhinoceros has been tabooed but also the porcupine and the tortoise. So far as at least these grounds are concerned, we must place the composition of these Dharmasūtras anterior to Aśoka's reign.

Another item of interest connected with social life is the condition of woman. The general belief is that the seclusion of woman was unknown to ancient India and that the Purdah system was introduced into the country by the Muhammadans. But nothing is more erroneous. A study of the dramas of Bhāsa and Kālidāsa leave no doubt as to Purdah being practised in their time. This is more than confirmed by the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana who flourished in the third century A. D.[1] But the practice can be traced back to a time long before Christ. Aśoka we have seen speaks of his *avarodhana*, which means inner closed female apartments. And quite in consonance with it is the mention of *antaḥpura* or harem in the Arthaśāstra,[2] where Kauṭilya gives directions not only how to build it but also how to guard

[1] SAMSJ., Vol. III., pt. I., pp .337 and 359-60.

[2] P. 40 and ff.

it against outsiders. The Rāmāyaṇa, again, contains several allusions to this custom of secluding women. But the earliest known reference to it is Pāṇini III. 2.36, which yields the term *asūryaṁpaśyā* and has been explained in the *Kāśikā* as *asūryaṁpaśyā rāja-dārāḥ* (=those who do not see the sun, that is, the wives of a king). If the *Kāśikā* has given this as an example traditionally handed down, that means that the queens of a king were so rigorously shut up in the harem in Pāṇini's time that they had no opportunity of seeing the sun even.

Again, in Rock Edict IX. where Aśoka speaks of *maṅgalas* or lucky rites observed in times of sickness, marriage, son's birth, journey and so forth, the king remarks that in that respect "womankind performs much, manifold, (but) trivial, useless rite." The trait has been preserved almost intact by the Hindu orthodox women of the modern day, and reminds us of Bentham's observation that "the religion of a woman more easily deviates towards superstition; that is, towards minute observances." [1]

What the exact structure of society was in Aśoka's time we do not know. But a few and partial glimpses are afforded by two or three statements in his edicts. Thus in Rock Edict V.

[1] *Theory of Legislation* (Paternoster Library, 1896), p. 39.

we are told that the Dharma-Mahāmātras were to concern themselves with those Brāhmaṇs and Ibhyas who were hirelings. The Brāhmaṇs here are, of course, the worldly Brāhmaṇs, and not the Brāhmaṇ recluses and mendicants who are associated with the Śramaṇas. The term *ibhya* is a curious one. It occurs once in the Upanishads and is not unknown to the Pāli literature. It is, for instance, found used in the Mahānārada Kassapa Jātaka, where the commentator explains it by Gahapati (Gṛihapati). Gṛihapati has been commonly taken to stand for the third class, Vaiśyas, of the Brahmanical system. But the term Vessa (Vaisya) is met with in Pāli texts only in connection with theoretical discussions, but they contain no indication that the Vaiśyas formed one distinct caste or class.[1] The Ibhyas or Gṛihapatis, on the other hand, formed a definite social group, an aristocratic class always ranking after the Kshatriyas and the Brāhmaṇs. It may appear somewhat singular that the Aśoka inscriptions do not contain a single reference to the Kshatriyas. But we have to bear in mind that like the Vaiśyas the Kshatriyas also, in the sense of the warrior caste, had no existence. Kshatriyas then denoted the ruling class, which in Aśoka's time comprised his relatives, his

[1] Fick's *Social Organisation, etc.* (trans.), pp. 251 and ff.

feudatories and the Anta or bordering kings in South India. And these, we know, have been referred to by Aśoka in his edicts. Like the Kshatriya or warrior caste the Śūdras also were known to theoretical discussions only, but had no real existence as a caste or a single class, and the lower strata of society in Aśoka's time are represented by Bhṛitakas or hired labourers and Dāsas or bondsmen, kindness and mercy to whom are specially inculcated by the king and form part of the code of moral duties that according to him fall under Dhaṁma. The Bhṛitakas and Dāsas were essentially distinct social groups at a time when the caste system, as we understand it, had not arisen. The system of slavery no longer exists in India now, and although hired labourers are by no means unknown, they come from various castes; and caste, and not class, forms the characteristic feature of the modern social hierarchy.

Another point connected with the social life of India in Aśoka's time is hinted by his Rock Edict II. There the king tells us that in his own dominions as well as those of the neighbouring potentates he established two kinds of medical treatment, one relating to the man and the other to the animal. And he further informs us that medicinal herbs, roots, and fruits, wherever they were not to be found, have everywhere been imported and planted.

What we are to understand by this record is that Aśoka opened dispensaries for men and *pinjrapols* for animals. It is difficult to say whether the practice of establishing charitable institutions existed in any other part of India, but certainly it was not unknown in the Bombay Presidency. Thus, from the records of the eighteenth century it is quite clear that in both Mahārāshṭra and Gujarāt, kings and chiefs frequently arranged for free medical help being given to the needy and indigent, that, as a consequence, the physician was often rewarded with grants of rent-free land or village, and that in some cases the purpose of these grants is expressly stated to be the growing of medicinal herbs on those plots of land.[1] As regards the *pinjrapols* or animal hospitals, they are found to this day in Western India. The earliest description of a *pinjrapol* is that furnished by Hamilton and is of one that was maintained at Surat late in the eighteenth century.[2] Any animal with a broken limb or otherwise disabled is admitted without any regard to the caste or nationality of its master. This suits here excellently. For, when Aśoka says that he organised medical treatment for both man and

[1] *Selections from the Satara Rajas' and the Peshwas' Diaries*, Vol. VIII, pp. 221-3; S. H. Hodivala's *Studies in Parsi History*, pp. 186-8. I am indebted to Dr. Surendranath Sen for both these references.

[2] Hamilton's *Description of Hindostan* (1820), Vol. I., p. 718, 4to ed.

animal, what he means is that in the case of the former he established charitable dispensaries for distributing medicine gratis and in the case of the latter something like a *pinjrapol*. When again he says that medicinal herbs, roots and fruits were imported and planted where they did not exist previously, we are to understand that he established farms attached to those institutions so that all medicines might be there for ready use. It is indeed curious to find that the custom of giving free medical relief to the diseased man or animal which was in existence in West India in the eighteenth century was prevalent as early as the third century B. C.[1] And what is still further noteworthy is that through the philanthropic activity of Aśoka all the drugs then known were made available to the world.

No account of the social life of this period can be complete without a consideration of its cultural side. This we will now attempt as briefly as possible. Here too it must be remembered that the Aśoka inscriptions tell us little about the cultural development, as such, of the period. They however shed much light upon the vehicles of culture, namely, writing or alphabet and speech or language. The records

[1] The subject requires a careful investigation; but, in the meanwhile, see *The Surgical Instruments of the Hindus*, by G. N. Mukhopādhyāya, Vol. I., pp. 34 and ff., and pp. 48 and ff.

of Aśoka, it will be seen, have been engraved in two *lipis* or scripts; (1) Brāhmī and (2) Kharoshṭhī. Those incised in Kharoshṭhī are the Fourteen Rock Edicts found at Shāhbāzgarhī and Mānsherā. All his other inscriptions are in Brāhmī. Bühler, relying on one Chinese authority, gives Kharoshṭhī as the true form and derives it from Kharoshṭha (Ass-lip), the name of a sage who invented it. Dr. Sylvain Levi, however, relying on another Chinese authority, calls it Kharoshṭrī and traces it to Kharoshṭra, the name of a country near but outside India. The other script was called Brāhmī, because it is believed to have emanated from the god Brahmā. The former was written from right to left like Persian, Arabic and Urdū, and the latter from left to right like all Hindu scripts of the modern day. The former flourished in the north-west part of India and the neighbouring foreign countries as far as Chinese Turkestan, and the latter was in vogue all over India comprising even the regions where the Kharoshṭhī was written. The Kharoshṭhī died a natural death about the fifth century A. D., whereas the Brāhmī has been recognised to be the parent of all the scripts indigenous not only to India but also to Ceylon, Burma and Tibet. The fact that Kharoshṭhī was written from right to left points to its Semitic origin. It is derived from the Aramaic script which was widely spread,

from Egypt to Persia, during the rule of the Achæmenians. The theory that they, after their conquest of Gandhāra, imported the Arameans for the purpose of government and thereby made the people of India acquainted with the Aramaic language and alphabet has been proved by the recent discovery of an Aramaic inscription at Taxila. The Persian influence on the protocol and royal chancery of the Mauryan administration we have already noticed, and we have stated that it was due to Achæmenian occupation of north-west India.[1] Numerous and diverse are the views regarding the origin of the Brāhmī alphabet. They may however be reduced to two main theories. The first of these regards Brāhmī as of indigenous origin. It was first suggested by Lassen and afterwards supported by Sir Alexander Cunningham. The second theory is that of the Semitic origin. This theory is of two kinds, and of these the view which is now accepted by all European experts in Indian palæography is that of Weber and Bühler who maintain that Brāhmī is derived from the script of the Northern Semites, the earliest Phænician alphabet known to us and supposed to be of about B. C. 850. One of the strongest arguments urged by Cunningham in rejecting the Semitic origin was that Brāhmī ran from left to right,

[1] Bühler's *Indian Palæography* (trans.), pp. 24 and ff.; IA., 1904, pp. 79. and ff; *Ibid*, 1905, pp. 21 and ff., and pp. 41 and ff.; *Ibid*, 1906, pp. 4 and ff.; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I., pp. 62 and 657.

and not from right to left as Semitic scripts do. But Bühler has conclusively shown that even Brāhmī was originally written from right to left. Reminiscences of such a practice are traceable in Aśoka inscriptions. One such may be detected in the reversed forms of single letters like *dh*, *t* and *o* which are met with in these records. Conjunct consonants also are sometimes written in a reversed manner in these inscriptions. Thus *tpa*, *sta* and *vya* are engraved as if they were *pta*, *tsa* and *yva*. This is another reminiscence of the original writing of Brāhmī from right to left. The triumph of the Semitic theory was thus complete until six years ago when the pre-historic cairns in the Nizam's Dominions were excavated and the marks on their pottery studied. At least five of these marks are identical with the letters of the Aśokan alphabet. Again, there is one neolith in the Indian Museum containing three contiguous marks which apparently form a writing and which bear a fairly close resemblance to three Aśokan letters. Thus the discussion about the origin of the Brāhmī alphabet is transferred from the historic to the pre-historic sphere. This is just as it should be, for even in Europe all Semitic and other alphabets are now being traced to the pre-historic times, and the view is gradually gaining strength that alphabet originated with the pre-historic man. And consequently when

as many as eight symbols on pre-historic artifacts are found closely to correspond to the alphabetic characters of the Aśoka period, it is more reasonable to suppose that Brāhmī has an indigenous though pre-historic origin than connect it with a Semitic alphabet of 800 B. C.[1]

The question that we have to consider now is : the condition of language in Aśoka's time. Before we proceed to discuss this problem, we have to take note of two orthographic peculiarities evidenced by the inscriptions ; otherwise they are likely to be confounded with dialectic characteristics. In the first place, we have to notice that homogeneous consonants are nowhere doubled in Aśokan records. Thus instead of *atthi* (Sk. *asti*) or *savva* (Sk. *sarva*) we find simply *athi* and *sava*. But this is not a peculiarity of these inscriptions only. For up till the fourth century A. D., there is hardly any epigraph, written in monumental Prākṛit, where this doubling of consonants caused by assimilation is graphically shown. Secondly, in the case of the Shāhbāzgaṛhi and Mānsherā versions of the Fourteen Rock Edicts we find that the long and the short vowels have not been graphically distinguished. This also is not an orthographic feature which is peculiar to the Aśokan records, but is found

[1] SAMSJ, Vol. III, pt. I. pp. 493 and ff. ; IA., 1919, pp. 57 and ff. ; JASB., 1921, pp. 209 and ff. ; *Calcutta Review*, 1923, pp. 358 and ff.

exhibited by all the Kharoshṭhī inscriptions of the later periods. These are the only two points which can legitimately be explained away as orthographic modes, but in all other matters the inscriptions may safely be taken as representing the actual pronunciation.

Now, what are the dialectic characteristics revealed by our records? Is there any evidence of the existence of dialects in Aśoka's time? This is the point we will now discuss. If we take the Seven Pillar Edicts of this king, we cannot fail to note that they have all been couched in one dialect, with distinctive characteristics uniformly exhibited by them all. These have been ably described by M. Senart.[1] Here we have no cerebral *ṇ*, no palatal *ñ* but invariably the dental *n*. The initial *y* is elided, so that we have for instance *athā* instead of *yathā*. *L* is always substituted for *r* (*lājā* for *rājā*). The nominative singular of masculine and usually of neuter, end in *e*, as in *samāje* for *samāja* and *dāne* for *dānaṁ*. The conjunct consonant with an uninitial *y*, as a rule, avoids assimilation by the insertion of an *i*—as in *avadhiyāni* for *avadhyāni*. An uninitial *r*, again, is invariably elided, as in *piya* for *priya*. As all the columns containing the Seven Pillar Edicts have been found in Madhyadeśa, we

[1] IA., 1892, pp. 171 and ff.

may say that all these peculiarities constitute the dialectic characteristics of that province. When we, however, come to the Fourteen Rock Edicts, we are confronted with another problem. We find in the first place that these dialectic peculiarities of Madhyadeśa are exhibited in full by the Dhauli and Jaugaḍā versions and almost fully by the Kālsī copy. And next when we take into consideration the remaining versions, we note that the Shāhbāzgaṛhī, Mānsherā and Girnār edicts, although they contain some characteristics of the Madhyadeśa dialect, yet exhibit not a few peculiarities of their own which are tantamount to dialectic differences; and if we further investigate the case, we find that they constitute two different dialects, one represented by the Shāhbāzgaṛhī and Mānsherā and the other by the Girnār copy. When an order was issued from the Secretariat of Pāṭaliputra, copies of one draft must have been despatched to every provincial government. When however this draft came to be engraved, it would be expected to be faithfully incised where the language was not different from that of the Pāṭaliputra court. This is just the reason why the Pillar Edicts, though they were inscribed at six different places, present practically one and the same draft. The places where the columns were originally put up were all in Madhyadeśa and consequently the draft which

was issued from Pāṭaliputra and which was in the dialect of that province came to be engraved as faithfully as possible. The case, however, was different in regard to the Rock Edicts. So far as the Kālsī, Dhauli and Jaugaḍā versions were concerned, the places being either included or conterminous with the Madhyadeśa, they contain practically one draft and couched almost wholly in the dialect of the Pillar Edicts. Shāhbāzgaṛhī and Mānsherā, however, are comprised in Uttarāpatha, and Girnār in Dakshiṇāpatha.[1] They had their own dialects, and the result was that although every attempt was made to follow the Madhyadeśa draft, that could not prevent the provincial dialectic peculiarities from creeping in. What are the dialectic characteristics which were peculiar to Uttarāpatha on the one hand and Dakshiṇāpatha on the other? That these dialects were different from that of the Madhyadeśa is indicated by the fact that the characteristics of the Madhyadeśa dialect are all conspicuous by their absence. Thus they have not only the dental *n*, but also the palatal *ñ* and the lingual *ṇ*. The nominative masculine singular ends in *o*, not *e*. *L* is not substituted for *r*, and so on. Let us now see in what respects the dialects of the Uttarāpatha

[1] CL., 1918, pp. 44 and fol.

and the Dakshiṇāpatha differed from each other. The locative singular of both, no doubt, sometimes ended in *e*, but, in the case of the latter, often in *mhi*, and of the former in *si* as of the Madhyadeśa. The former had the three sibilants *ś*, *sh* and *s*, but the latter had only *s* as in Madhyadeśa. *Vya* was generally retained in the latter, but was assimilated and became *vva* in the former. In the former, again, *y* and *i* were frequently interchanged, and the third letter changed to the first of its class. The latter retained the diphthong *ai*, and had *sṭ* always for *shṭh* and sometimes for *st*.

Another point about Indian philology on which light is thrown by the Aśokan inscriptions is worth noting. Some philologists talk rather vaguely about phonetic decay when they speak of Pāli and Prākṛit, and maintain that it is an indication of a later age.[1] This phonetic decay, they contend, is represented by assimilation, hiatus, a fondness for cerebrals and aspirates, and so on. But must the language or dialect where these characteristics are perceptible be necessarily later than that where they are not? May they not rather denote a mode of pronunciation which is peculiar to one class, people or country, and not to another? Let us see at what solution the Aśokan records enable us

[1] R. G. Bhandarkar's *Wilson Philological Lectures*, pp. 8 and f.; pp. 34 and ff.

to arrive. If we compare the Girnār version, for instance, with that of Kālsī, we cannot fail to notice that the language of the latter exhibits greater phonetic decay than that of the former. We have already seen that the original *r* of the conjunct consonants is as a rule retained by the former but invariably dropped by the latter. Thus in the former we may find *sarvatra* but always *savata* (*savvatta*) in the latter. Again while Girnār has *hasti*, Kālsī gives *hathi* (*hatthi*). These are only a few out of the many instances of assimilation to be found in the language of the Kālsī version as compared with that of Girnār. Take, again, the fondness for cerebrals. For the Sanskrit *kṛita* and *bhṛita*, Girnār gives *kata* and *bhata*, but Kālsī invariably *kaṭa* and *bhaṭa*. Similarly, for *dbādasa* or *edisa* of Girnar we find *duvaḍasa* and *heḍisa* in Kālsī. The latter word *heḍisa*, again, along with *heta*, *hida* and so on shows also the fondness for aspirate in the case of the Kālsī dialect. It will thus be seen that according to the ordinary laws of Pāli and Prākṛits, the Kālsī dialect shows greater phonetic degeneracy than the Girnār. Will any philologist, however, dare to conclude that the former is posterior in time to the latter ? Most certainly, he cannot, because the Girnār and Kālsī dialects were existing side by side in Aśoka's reign, and one cannot therefore be possibly said to be of

later age than the other. Nevertheless, according to the canons of these philologists the Kālsī dialect evinces greater phonetic decay than the Girnār and must therefore be regarded as posterior to it. The truth of the matter is that what are called the laws of Pāli and Prākṛit speech do not at all indicate phonetic degeneracy and therefore a later age as contended by them, but rather a mode of pronunciation peculiar to a class, people or country, which was prevalent at all ages. Take, for instance, the Vedic language.[1] That the doubling of consonants through assimilation was known to the Vedic speech may be seen from the fact that side by side with *vivishṭyai* we also obtain the form *viviṭṭyai*. As instances of the fondness for cerebrals we meet with *kuṭa*, *paḍbhiḥ* and *vidaḍḍhatā* side by side with *kṛita*, *padbhiḥ* and *vidagdhatā* in the Vedic texts. In modern times also do we not note that some Bengali Pandits even, while reading Sanskrit passages, pronounce *smṛiti* and *lakshmī*, for instance, as if they were *sṛiti* and *lakkhī*? The truth of the matter is that there is absolutely no evidence to prove that these phonetic changes are really phonetic decay and must necessarily point to a later age as is asserted by some philologists. On the contrary, they may be an indication

[1] *Indische Studien*, II. 87, note.

of a different habit of pronunciation which may co-exist with the correct and polished style of it at any period, or in any class or province.

In this connection is worth remembering what Bharata has said in the seventeenth chapter of his *Nāṭya-śāstra*.[1] He clearly tells us that Sanskrit and Prākṛit are not two languages, but two modes of speech, that is, of pronunciation and diction (*pāṭhya*). He recognises four languages only, namely, *abhibhāshā*, that of the gods, *ārya-bhāshā*, that of the kings, *jāti-bhāshā*, languages of the various castes and tribes, and *jātyantarī*, those of birds and beasts. The first two are always characterised by *saṁskṛita-pāṭhya* or polished speech, but the third comprises both, that is, the *saṁskṛita* or polished, and the *prākṛita* or vulgar mode, of speech. Much confusion has thus been caused by the loose use of these terms, and, above all, by thinking that the phonetic changes exhibited by Pāli, for instance, are phonetic degeneracy and therefore a criterion of later age. If we carefully divest our minds of the confusion and prejudices created and spread by some philologists, we shall find that the language in which the edicts of the Mauryan emperor, Aśoka, have been couched is just that language, whose grammar Pāṇini, Kātyāyana and Patañjali composed, but that while the

[1] v. 25 and ff.

former represent the *prākṛita*, the works of the latter are concerned with the *saṁskṛita*, form of that language. We will select here a specimen passage from Rock Edict IX. of the Girnār recension:

Devānaṃ-piyo Priyadasi rājā evaṁ āha (:) asti jano uchāvachaṁ maṁgalaṁ karote ābādhesu vā āvāha-vivāhesu vā putralābhesu vā pravāsaṁmhi vā. Etamhi cha añamhi cha jano uchāvachaṁ maṁgalaṁ karote.

Now, if we make allowance for certain phonetic peculiarities, it is difficult to say that the language of this edict is not the *bhāshā* for which Pāṇini and Patañjali wrote. If we take a learned Pandit and a boor speaking any vernacular of India, we will find greater divergence of speech than here. An impartial scholar like Dr. F. W. Thomas has already remarked that "it is not too much to say that in modern English, both spoken and written, we find greater deviations from the norm than these Edicts display."[1] Of course, in Aśoka's time the phonetic peculiarities were of three different types, according as the three provinces, the Madhyadeśa, Uttarāpatha and Dakshiṇāpatha were concerned, and these no doubt constituted the three main dialects of the period. But if we once admit that these dialectic differences represented but so many different modes

[1] JRAS., 1904, p. 462.

of pronunciation and diction, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the norm of these edicts must be just that language which is treated by the grammarians. This reminds us of the remark of Patañjali that the language for which Pāṇini wrote was the language of those *śishṭa* or cultured Brāhmaṇs who spoke it naturally and without any study of grammar.[1] What is worthy of note is that the *śishṭas* referred to by Patañjali are precisely those who did not study the *Ashṭādhyāyī* and yet spoke as taught in that work.[2] This shows that up till circa 150 B. C., the time of Patañjali, the language for which *Ashṭādhyāyī* was the grammar continued to be the vernacular of the cultured Brāhmaṇs of Aryāvarta.

It may be admitted that the dialects of the Aśoka period represented but the modes of speech which were current mostly among classes of men who were not cultured. But it may be asked why no inscription, has been found which is in the language of the *śishṭa* Brāhmaṇs? For has not the late Dr. Fleet, a renowned epigraphist, told us most emphatically that before A. D. 150, the time of Rudradāman of the Western Kshatrapa dynasty, there is not a single inscription in Sanskrit clearly showing that up till then Sanskrit was not understood by the people at large and that it could not have been spoken by

[1] R. G. Bhandarkar's *Wilson Philological Lectures*, pp. 295-6.

[2] JRAS., 1904, pp. 479-80.

them?[1] It is not quite correct, however, to say that not a single inscription has been discovered of this period which is in this language. For the inscription of the Ghosūṇḍī step well found in the Udaipur State, Rājputānā, is in what is called Sanskrit, especially as we have here the dual form twice used.[2] This record has been assigned by Bühler to the period between B. C. 350 and 250. The inscription is therefore of about the time of Aśoka. It is not at all unreasonable to say that more of such Sanskrit records must have been originally engraved but they have been lost. Such inscriptions could only be associated with Brahmanical monuments, which, just because they were in and near villages and towns, and not in solitary localities far removed from human habitation, as was mostly the case with the Buddhist and Jaina monuments, have now perhaps been irretrievably lost.

Dr. Fleet and Prof. Rhys Davids maintain that the inscriptions ranging between 300 B. C. and 100 A. D. are all in a sort of Pāli closely allied to, and based upon, the vernacular. This in their opinion conclusively proves that the language current up to 100 A. D. was practically Pāli and that Sanskrit or the *bhāshā* for which Pāṇini and Patañjali wrote could not have been a vernacular at all during that time. It is

[1] *Ibid*, p. 483.

[2] MASI., no. 4, p. 119.

not possible to accept this view. In the first place, we have just seen that there is at least one epigraph of about Aśoka's time which is in clear and unmistakable Sanskrit. Secondly, these scholars do not seem to have given any thought to what the French savant, M. Senart, has said in regard to the language of these inscriptions, or the Monumental Prakrit as he calls it. We have, in the first place, to bear in mind the wide area over which they are dispersed, namely, from Gujarāt and the caves of the Western Coast to Amarāvatī at the mouth of the Kistna and the caves of Khaṇḍagiri in Orissa on the Eastern coast, and from Sāñchī and Barhaut in Central India to Banavāsī,[1] the southern extremity of the Bombay Presidency and Kāñchī or modern Conjeeveram in the Madras Presidency. Secondly, these records extend over at least seven centuries, from about 250 B.C. to 450 A.D., and do not disclose any appreciable variation between the most ancient and the most modern of them. Dr. Otto Franke [2] has, no doubt, shown some dialectical peculiarities noticeable among them, but they are so few especially as compared to those we detect in the inscriptions of Aśoka that they are of no consequence for our present purpose. Now, the question arises: how it is possible for

[1] IA., 1892, p. 260.
[2] *Pāli and Sanskrit*, pp. 110 and ff.

a language, spread over such a wide area, to pass seven centuries through the mouth of the common people without decay or transformation? This is certainly impossible, and this conclusion is more than amply confirmed by the fact that the earliest literary specimens which we possess of the Prākṛits, the stanzas of Hāla and the Prākṛits of the most ancient dramas, are of about the end of this period or shortly removed from it, and yet they reveal a phonetic alteration which was much farther advanced. The dialect of these inscriptions could not possibly have been the living popular language spoken over such an extensive area and over such a wide period as seven centuries, but may, in all likelihood, have formed the *lingua franca* or the Hindustānī of Ancient India from *circa* 200 B.C. to 450 A.D. Even in the Hindustānī of the present day, provincial peculiarities are by no means absent. Certainly the Hindustānī of Mahārāshṭra is as much tinged with Marāṭhī phraseology and construction as that of Bengal is with Bangālī, and the Hindustānī of both Mahārāshṭra and Bengal is different from the Hindustānī that is spoken, for instance, at Benares. Nevertheless, nobody can dispute the proposition that Hindustānī is the *lingua franca* of Modern India. Such was the case with the Monumental Prākṛit, which, though some provincial differences were here and there perceptible in

it as was first noticed by Dr. Franke, was nevertheless the Hindustānī of Bhāratvarsha from about 200 B.C. to at least 150 A.D. The question that we have now to answer is when and why it became the *lingua franca*. Certainly it was not so in the time of Aśoka. The Madhyadeśa dialect was as distinct from that prevalent in the Uttarāpatha as both were from the dialect current in the Dakshiṇāpatha. It is thus not one but three dialects that we find used in Aśoka's records. The Monumental Prākṛit, on the other hand, was practically one language as employed in inscriptions. Besides, it came into existence not in the time of Aśoka but shortly after him. What may have led to the rise of this language can be only surmised. Through the unflagging missionary zeal of Aśoka there must have been an unprecedented activity all over India. All barriers which detached one province from another must have been broken and an interprovincial communication sprung up which was at once very brisk and frequent, with the result that soon after Aśoka's death the necessity for a common language for the whole of India must have made itself most keenly felt. Perhaps the province which was then the centre of this activity and where the parent of the Prākṛit called Mahārāshṭrī was spoken supplied its local dialect to meet the new demand. And what was once a provincial dialect began to rise to

the eminence of the universal language in which not only the scriptures of the Buddhists were written in order that they may be understood all over India but which came everywhere to be recognised as the official or political language, and was adopted by people of other religions also. Thus the Vaishṇava inscription on the celebrated pillar of Besnagar, the Nānāghāṭ cave epigraph of Sātakarṇi enumerating his various Brahmanical sacrifices, and the royal charters issued by Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi and Vāsishṭhīputra Puḷumāvi of the Śātavāhana dynasty are all in the Monumental Prākṛit which was practically the same as the Pāli of the southern Buddhist scriptures.[1]

[1] All these remarks about Pāli and Monumental Prākṛit have been extracted from the two lectures I delivered in 1919 before the Calcutta University. In the same lectures I have propounded the view that what is called the Gāthā dialect is practically the Mixed Sanskrit of the Inscriptions of the Kushana period, and represents the spoken language, if not the vernacular, of the *śishṭa* people from the first century B.C. to the third century A.D., when, owing to the increasing supremacy of Brahmanism, Sanskrit was being largely studied even by non-Brahmanical sects and Pāli as a literary vehicle was not yet extinct. This is just the reason why we find some Buddhist scriptures written in this language. It is natural that the Buddhist sects that arose in the Kushana period should have their scriptures in a language that was spoken by the *śishṭas*. Things remained in the transitional stage till about the third century A.D. when Sanskrit was universally adopted for current use and thus took complete possession of the field as a literary vehicle which was destined never to escape it. Those Buddhist sects which sprang up at this time had their scriptures cast wholly in Sanskrit. This is the reason why we find the Dhammapada, for instance, in three versions, that is, composed not only in Pāli and Mixed Sanskrit but also pure Sanskrit.

A few words may now be said in regard to the art that prevailed in Aśoka's time. Here too we shall confine ourselves entirely to the monuments, actually raised by him and not associated with his name. This is perhaps the only aspect of culture on which light is thrown by his monuments. They are, we know, the rocks and the columns which bear his edicts of Dhaṁma and the caves he dedicated to the Ājīvikas. As pieces of art and architecture they have been so well described that nothing need be said here. What we are concerned with is to consider them both from the engineer's and the artist's point of view. It is not at all improbable, as was first pointed out by M. Senart, that the decrees of the Achæmenian monarch, Darius, suggested to the Mauryan emperor the idea of issuing religious edicts engraved on the rocks. And further Smith seems to be right in thinking that what, above all, served as the model here for Aśoka was the inscription of the former at Naksh-i-Rustam "which is supposed to be 'perceptive not historical' and to contain 'the last solemn admonition of Darius to his countrymen with respect to their future conduct in policy, morals and religion.'"[1] Aśoka, however, carried the idea one step further by bringing the columns also into requisition. If big rocks have

[1] Smith's *Asoka*, p. 141.

been polished and inscribed, Aśoka's workmen probably did not show any superiority over their Persian brother-craftsmen. The case, however, was entirely different in so far as the pillars were concerned. Pillars were doubtless not unknown to the Persian structures. But the erection of pillars independent and not forming part of any edifices seems to have originated in India alone and is not found in Western Asia or Europe before the time of the Roman emperors. Again, the Asokan columns are monoliths of singularly massive proportions from 40 to 50 feet in length and with an average diameter of 2′ 7″. Quarrying blocks nearly four feet square and fifty feet long is an occupation most taxing even to the powers of the twentieth century when we so much boast of our modern scientific knowledge, training and appliances. How the workmen of the Mauryan period achieved this gigantic task two thousand years ago cannot but fill our minds with wonder. But to cut true, dress, and proportion blocks of such stupendous dimensions into beautiful round columns and burnish it like mirror at which even a modern mason stands aghast was a still more arduous and delicate task. Of this even, they acquitted themselves with eminent success. But this is not all. The pillars of Aśoka are one and all composed of sandstone from a quarry near Chunār in the Mirzāpur District, U. P. They are believed to

have been chiselled there and transported to the different places. The carriage of such unwieldy masses to great distances (and some of the pillars were sent hundreds of miles away from the hill-sides where they had been quarried) and setting them up at diverse and remote places, demanded an amount of mechanical appliances and ingenuity which would have been most trying, if not impossible, to the modern age. Sixteen centuries later we find three of Aśoka's pillars removed to Delhi by Sultan Firoz Shah ; and fortunately for us a graphic description of the extreme difficulty of conveyance and erection experienced by his engineers has been preserved in the case of one of these monuments, namely, that brought from Toprā in the Umbāllā District, Punjab. Shams-i-Sirāj, a contemporary historian, says :—

"After Sultan Firoz returned from his expedition against Thatta he often made excursions in the neighbourhood of Delhi. In this part of the country there were two stone columns. One was in the village of Topra in the District of Sadhaura and Khizrabad, at the foot of the hills, the other in the vicinity of the town of Mirath...... When Firoz Shah first beheld these columns he was filled with admiration and resolved to remove them with great care as trophies to Delhi.

"Khizrabad is 90 *kos* from Delhi, in the vicinity of the hills. When the Sultan visited that District and saw the column in the village of Topra, he resolved to remove it to Delhi and there erect it as a memorial to future

generations. After thinking over the best means of lowering the column, orders were issued commanding the attendance of all the people dwelling in the neighbourhood within and without the Doāb, all soldiers, both horse and foot. They were ordered to bring all implements and materials suitable for the work. Directions were issued for bringing parcels of the *sembal* (silk-cotton) tree. Quantities of the silk cotton were placed round the column, and when the earth at its base was removed, it fell gently over on the bed prepared for it. The cotton was then removed by degrees, and after some days the pillar lay safe upon the ground. When the foundations of the pillar were examined, a large square stone was found as a base, which also was taken out.

"The pillar was then encased from top to bottom in reeds and raw skins, so that no damage might accrue to it. A carriage with forty-two wheels was constructed and ropes were attached to each wheel. Thousands of men hauled at every rope, and after great labour and difficulty the pillar was raised on to the carriage. A strong rope was fastened to each wheel, and 200 men (42 × 200 = 8,400) pulled at each of these ropes. By the simultaneous exertions of so many thousand men, the carriage was removed, and was brought to the banks of the Jumna. Here the Sultan came to meet it. A number of large boats had been collected, some of which could carry 5,000 and 7,000 maunds of grain, and the least of them 2,000 maunds. The column was very ingeniously transferred to these boats, and was then conducted to Firozabad, where it was landed and conveyed into the Kushk with infinite labour and skill.

"At this time the author of this book was twelve years of age and a pupil of the respected Mīr Khān. When the pillar was brought to the place, a building was commenced for its reception near the Jāmi Masjid (mosque) and the

most skilful architects and workmen were employed. It was constructed of stone and chunam (fine mortar) and consisted of several stages or steps. When a step was finished the column was raised on to it, another step was then built and the pillar was again raised, and so on in succession until it reached the intended height. On arriving at this stage, other contrivances had to be devised to place it in an erect position. Ropes of great thickness were obtained and windlasses were placed on each of the six stages of the base. The ends of the ropes were fastened to the top of the pillar, and other ends passed over the windlasses, which were firmly secured with many fastenings. The wheels were then turned, and the column was raised about half a *gaz* (yard). Logs of wood and bags of cotton were then placed under it to prevent it sinking again. In this way, and by degrees, the column was raised to the perpendicular. Large beams were then placed round it as supports until quite a cage of scaffolding was formed. It was thus secured in an upright position straight as an arrow, without the smallest deviation from the perpendicular. The square stone before spoken of was placed under the pillar."[1]

Firoz Shah removed only three of Aśoka's pillars which again were not the biggest and were transported to not more than 150 miles from the original places. On the other hand, Aśoka had not three, but nearly thirty, such columns erected and carried in many cases to much larger distances. The quarrying, the chiselling and the conveyance of these monuments offer a most eloquent testimony to the

[1] Elliot, *Hist. India*, III. 350.

highly specialised skill of labour and the extreme resourcefulness of Aśoka's engineers.

It is worthy of note that there was hardly any stone building prior to the time of Aśoka, and that India is indebted to this Buddhist emperor for the use of stone for architectural purposes. In his edicts Aśoka has told us in many places that one of the two objects which impelled him to engrave them on rocks and pillars is that they may endure permanently. This was the reason why Aśoka deemed it advisable to expend the skilled labour and resources of his state and have his Dhaṁma-lipis incised in stone. In the architecture of India before the time of Aśoka, wood seems to have been chiefly, if not solely, employed as it is in Burma, China and Japan almost to this day. Certainly, it is a better building material than stone except, of course, in point of durability. Megasthenes tells us that Pāṭaliputra was "surrounded by a wooden wall pierced with loopholes for the discharge of arrows." If the very capital of Chandragupta was defended by such palisading, the inference is natural that the architecture of the period was almost solely wooden. Even in the Jātakas we find copious references to wooden buildings,[1] a few to brick structures,[2] but none at all to stone

[1] Jāt., II. 18. 7-13; VI. 332. 21 and ff,

[2] *Ibid.*, VI. 429. 17.8.

architecture. This should not, however, be taken to mean that the art and industry of the stone-cutter was unknown, as references to it in the Jātakas are by no means wanting.[1] Again, of about Aśoka's time is at least one stone image, that found at Parkham,[2] for the sculpturing of which the royal masons were not responsible. Again, at Nagarī in Rājputānā we have the remains of a cyclopean enclosure wall of a shrine dedicated to Vāsudeva-Saṁkarshaṇa, which has to be ascribed to a time slightly earlier than Aśoka.[3] Another stone structure, which according to Fergusson [4] was certainly anterior to Aśoka, is the one at Rājgīr, known as *Jarāsandh-ki baiṭhak.* If any further proof of the development of the stone art and industry prior to this king is required, it is furnished by the massive stone coffer exhumed from the Piprāwā Stūpa.[5] It is a huge monolith in grey sandstone measuring 4′ 4″ × 2′ $8\frac{1}{4}$″ × 2′ $2\frac{1}{4}$″, and bespeaks the highest quality of craftsmanship. When the idea of imparting a durable character to his Dhamma-lipis seized his mind, Aśoka seems to have availed himself of the stone-cutter's art which was already in a highly developed and flourishing condition.

[1] See *e.g.* Jāt. I. 478. 5 and 12.

[2] *Cat. Arch. Museum, Mathurā,* p. 83 and pl. XII.

[3] MASI., no. 4, pp. 128 and ff.

[4] HIEA., vol. I, p. 75.

[5] SAMSJA., vol. III., pt. I, p. 426.

So much for the monuments of Aśoka from the engineer's point of view. But what degree of development do they evince as works of art? Here too the columns are the most important of the three classes into which they have been divided. Each column consists of three parts, the shaft with what is called the bell-shaped capital, the abacus, and the crowning sculpture in the round. The capital, abacus, and crowning sculpture together form the most important and artistic feature of the column. By far the best specimen of this is that found at Sārnāth, which is known as the Sārnāth capital. In regard to it Sir John Marshall says: "The Sarnath capital, on the other hand, though by no means a masterpiece, is the product of the most developed art of which the world was cognisant in the third century B. C. —the handiwork of one who had generations of artistic effort and experience behind him. In the masterful strength of the crowning lions, with their swelling veins and tense muscular development, and in the spirited realism of the reliefs below, there is no trace whatever of the limitations of primitive art. So far as naturalism was his aim, the sculptor has modelled his figures direct from nature and has delineated their forms with bold, faithful touch; but he has done more than this: he has consciously and of set purpose infused a tectonic conventional

spirit into the four lions, so as to bring them into harmony with the architectural character of the monument, and in the case of the horse on the abacus he has availed himself of a type well-known and approved in western art. Equally mature is the technique of his relief work. In early Indian, as in early Greek sculpture, it was the practice, as we shall presently see, to compress the relief between two fixed planes, the original front plane of the slab and the plane of the background. In the reliefs of the Sārnāth capital there is no trace whatever of this process; each and every part of the animal is modelled according to its actual depth without reference to any ideal front plane, with the result that it presents the appearance almost of a figure in the round which has been cut in half and then applied to the background of the abacus."[1]

The archæologists, however, are of opinion that the Aśokan architecture is an exotic. One view is that most of the features exhibited by the upper half of the column, especially the bell-shaped capital were borrowed from Assyria through Persia from where Aśoka "obtained those hints which in India led to the conversion of wooden architecture into stone."[2] The second, which is the latest, view is that the

[1] CHI., I. 620-1.
[2] HIEA., vol. I., pp. 58-9.

Aśokan column is entirely a Perso-Hellenic affair. The architectural features were Persian but the modelling of the living forms was entirely Hellenistic. For about this time the Hellenistic spirit was vigorous in Bactria and "was mastering and vitalising the dull, expressionless forms of Iran."[1] And so this Perso-Hellenic art was transmitted from Bactria to India. Now, if this Perso-Hellenic art is really represented by the Aśokan column and developed itself in Bactria, how is it that no specimens of it have been found in Bactria itself or its neighbouring region, *e.g.*, the north-west part of India? Unless such specimens are found, the Perso-Hellenic influence is scarcely more than a gratuitous assumption. The idea, again, of erecting pillars by themselves and not as forming integral part of any building, is, as stated above, neither Persian nor Hellenistic, but Indian. Similarly, if the Bactrian Greeks took such a prominent part in the modelling and chiselling connected with the Aśokan column, it is rather strange that they have introduced no forms or features into this architecture which are typically Hellenic, such as those of the Ionic or Corinthian order. These last we find in the architecture of the Indo-Parthian and Kushan period, but not at all in the time of Aśoka. It is true that the honeysuckle,

[1] CHI., I. 622.

the cable and the bead and reel ornaments which are familiar to the student of the Hellenic art are found in the Aśokan column. But these ornaments are not typically Hellenic, because the Greeks themselves are known to have borrowed them from Assyria. And it is more natural to say that the other features of the column, such as the bell-shaped capital, smooth unfluted shafts, and lustrous polish are all adopted from the Assyrians, but directly, and not through the Persians. It is safer to say, as Rajendra Lal Mitra contended many years ago, that the Indians copied from the Assyrians but certainly at a time far removed from that of Aśoka.[1] This conclusion is quite in keeping with the fact that the structure, *Jarāsandh-ki Baiṭhak*, which is taken by all archæologists as of the pre-Mauryan period, is supposed by Fergusson to have an Assyrian origin and copied from the Birs Nimrud.[2] But when and where did the Indians and the Assyrians come in contact? These Assyrians are undoubtedly the Asuras, mentioned in the Vedic literature, as a people in India itself, with whom the Vedic Aryans were constantly warring. They seem to be already in possession of the greater portion of India before the Aryans came. The Asuras appear to have been great builders. For even

[1] *Indo-Aryans*, vol. I., pp. 14 and ff.

[2] *Cave-Temples of India*, pp. 34-5.

in the Ṛig-Veda many references are found to their 'seven-walled' or 'iron-walled' cities or to their 'hundred cities of stone.' This must refer to the fortified ramparts of the period, some of which thus seem to have been of stone. Royal residences in the Ṛig-Veda, again, are said to be 'thousand-doored' and possess 'halls built with a thousand columns,' exactly as we find in the case of the hall built for Yudhishṭhira by Maya the Asura, as the Mahābhārata informs us. These most probably were of wooden construction. The special characteristic of the Asura architecture was the cyclopean style of the buildings. They raised structures on a colossal scale. The Indian civilisation in Aśoka's time had almost as much of the Assyrian as of the Aryan element; and, so far as architecture was concerned, India was greatly indebted to the Assyrians or Asuras, but certainly to those Assyrians who were settled in India and had made it their home. The Aśokan architecture thus, though dominantly Assyrian, was yet Indian.

APPENDIX

It is a great pity that no scholar has yet properly studied the Asura problem. Some scholars [1] have no doubt recently suggested that the Asuras referred to in the Vedic literature as a people were most probably the Assyrians and that these references are reminiscences of the times when the Aryans were in contact with the Assyrians somewhere in Mesopotamia or Central Asia but certainly outside India. But it has apparently been forgotten that the same conclusions were expressed long before them by H. H. Wilson and K. M. Banerjea. The former has told us that the Asuras were "the anti-Vaidik people of India" whose cities are said to have been destroyed by Indra.[2] The latter went one step further and identified these Asuras with Assyrians. He also pointed out that the three different senses in which the term *assur* is used in Cuneiform Inscriptions are also the senses in which the word *asura* is employed in Vedic texts.[3] He, however, thought that the Aryans met the Assyrians in Central Asia, and not in India itself as Wilson maintained. Wilson's view, however, seems to be more correct. Prof. V. K. Rajwade has recently written an elaborate paper on the term *Asura*, in which he rightly says: "There is an overwhelming majority of instances in which the word Asura is used in a good sense, the bad instances being in a minority of about 15, *i.e.*, about $\frac{1}{7}$th of the whole

[1] JRAS., 1916, pp. 363-4; JBBRAS., vol. XXV, pp. 76 and ff.

[2] Wilson's *Rig Veda*, vol. III, p. xiv.

[3] *Arian Witness*, pp. 49 and ff.

(105). This shows that the cleavage between the Rigvedic religion and Zoroastrianism happened towards the end of Rigvedic period. *The enmity became bitter and bitterer in post-Rigvedic times.*"[1] The last sentence is very important, because it clearly shows that the bitter hostilities of the Aryans with the Asuras took place in India, as in the post-Ṛigvedic times the Aryans were certainly settled in this country. There is again one passage in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, where we are told that one Asura race was the Prāchyas, which we know was another name for Magadha.[2] Quite in keeping with this is the fact that the Asuras are still found as a non-Aryan tribe in Chhota-Nagpur in Behār. This also agrees with the fact that in Rājgīr in Behār we have that *Jarasandh-ki Baiṭhak,* which, as we have seen already, is, according to Fergusson, of the pre-Mauryan period, and is copied from the Birs Nimrud in Assyria. This also explains why a Babylonian seal should have been found in India.[3] The seal is at present deposited in the museum at Nagpur, and dates from 2000 B.C. The exact find-spot is not known, but in 1918 the Curator informed me that it was found somewhere in the Central Provinces.

In the time of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, the Prāchyas represented but one of the Asura tribes. But there must have been other Asura settlements in other parts of India. A critical and detailed study of the Vedic literature and of the epics may enable us to deduce a history of their migrations and kingdoms. One such settlement probably was in the western part of the United Provinces, the region including Khāṇḍava-vana from whose conflagration

[1] PTFOC., pp. 18-9.

[2] XIII, 8. 1. 5; SBE., vol. XLIV, pp. 423-4.

[3] JASB., 1914, p. 462.

Arjuna saved the celebrated Mayāsura. The Asuras were known as a (fighting) people even as late as the time of Pāṇini, and are mentioned by him immediately after the *Parśus* (the ancient Persians) who form his Parśu *gaṇa*. They spoke a Mlechchha language.[1]

If the Assyrians were thus already in India when the Aryans penetrated the country, it may naturally be asked: what traces of Assyrian civilisation do we find in India? The first and foremost Assyrian influence has of course been traced in the ancient architecture of India. And the late Mr. B. G. Tilak has also shown that some of the spirits or demons in the Atharva-veda were clearly Chaldean.[2] As the Atharva-veda is later in age than the Ṛig-veda, this absorption of part of the Chaldean pantheon must have taken place in India. In fact, the civilisation of India prior to the rise of the Mauryan power was principally composed of the Aryan and Asura elements.

[1] JBBRAS., XXV. 78; ZDMG., LXVIII, 719.

[2] *Bhandarkar Commem. Vol.*, pp. 29 and ff.

CHAPTER VII.

Aśoka's Place in History.

We have by this time obtained a sufficiently clear idea of the manifold unflagging activity of Aśoka. We will now try to frame an accurate estimate of his work with a view to determine his real place in history. It is not, however, possible to form any critical view of his achievements unless we try to ascertain what ideal guided him and what motive impelled him. Does Aśoka anywhere unbosom himself of the inner spring of action that prompted him to this activity? So many times has the Buddhist monarch given us glimpses into the inner recesses of his mind that it is inconceivable that in this particular case alone which is of the greatest importance he has not thought fit to take us into his confidence. In Rock Edict VI., he says: "There is no higher duty than the welfare of the whole world. And what little effort I make is in order that I may be free from debt to the creatures, that I may render some happy here and that they may gain heaven in the next world." Aśoka's ideal is thus not simply the brotherhood of man, that is to say,

the brotherhood of the human being, but rather the brotherhood of the living being. It is the whole animate world with which he feels he is connected, and his supreme duty lies in securing them not only temporal but also spiritual weal. Again, so far as man was concerned, he thought that his duty lay in regard to the whole of mankind, and not simply his subjects. He is quite explicit on this point. In both the Separate Kaliṅga Edicts he tells us that just as for his offspring he desires welfare and happiness pertaining not only to this but also to the next world, he desires it precisely for all mankind, and, in the second of these edicts, goes further to instruct his officers to leave no stone unturned to induce the subjects of the neighbouring independent states to repose full confidence in him and convince them that "the king (Aśoka) is unto us even as a father; he loves us even as he loves himself; we are to the king even as his children." This unmistakably shows that Aśoka's attitude as of a father to his children is by no means restricted to his own subjects but extended also to those of the frontier kingdoms, so as to embrace the whole mankind as he knew it. It was no doubt in spiritual matters that conquest could be accomplished by any ruler, as was done by him, in the dominions of the independent neighbours and the subjects of the latter could thus be treated as if they were his own.

So far in regard to Aśoka's confession of the ideal that guided him and shaped his line of action. That this is a correct representation, and not an over-statement, may be seen from the sort of measures he adopted to realise his object. First, in regard to the physical happiness which was common to both the man and the beast, we have seen what philanthropic works he inaugurated.[1] The most important of these was the importing and growing of medicinal roots and herbs. This and the other charities, such as the digging of wells and planting of shade-giving trees, were carried out by him not only in his empire but also in the territories of his contemporary sovereigns both in and outside India. We also know what steps he took to prevent wanton cruelty to animals and curtail their slaughter.[2] It was not, however, the animal kingdom alone for which he showed his concern. Two of the ethical practices constituting Dhaṁma are, as we have seen, *prāṇānaṁ anāraṁbho*, non-destruction of life, and *avihīsā bhūtānaṁ*, non-injury to 'existing' creatures. And quite in keeping with this, he admits in Pillar Edict II., that he conferred various benefits "on the bipeds and quadrupeds, on birds and aquatic animals, even upto the boon of life." Aśoka had thus a comprehensive programme placed

[1] *Above*, pp. 145-6; 153-4.

[2] *Above*, pp. 150-1.

before him, which was not confined merely to the animal kingdom but embraced the whole creature world. So far, in regard to the physical happiness, or the temporal good, which he accomplished and which, as we have remarked, was shared by man along with other creatures. But we know he strained every nerve to promote spiritual weal also, that is to say, to generate and disseminate Dhaṁma among the whole of mankind, not simply among the people of his own empire but also outside. We have noted that Aśoka claims to have achieved great success in this sphere of activity and that it was not an empty boast even in respect of the countries outside India.[1] For we know what results crowned his missionary efforts. Buddha's teaching spread itself all over India and Ceylon. It also spread to China before B.C. 200. And though there are no indications of Buddhism being actually adopted in Western Asia, there can be little doubt that it greatly influenced Christianity, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that for one of its cardinal doctrines, the brotherhood of man, it was indebted to the teaching of Buddha, spread by this Buddhist monarch.

We have thus seen what ideal was constantly before Aśoka's mind, and what motive power impelled him to all-embracing and unceasing

[1] *Above*, pp. 154 and ff.

activity. We can now be in a position to determine what place he occupies in history. He has been compared to various fellow monarchs of the ancient world. But he does not in the least suffer by this comparison. Thus he has been compared to the Roman emperor, Constantine the Great, from two different points of view. Prof. Rhys Davids holds that Aśoka was like Constantine, because just as the religious benefactions of the latter were the cause of the spiritual decay of the Christian Church, Aśoka's conversion to Buddhism and his munificent endowments to the Saṁgha were "the first step on the downward path of Buddhism, the first step to its expulsion from India."[1] In the first place, it is not quite correct to say that Buddhism has been expelled from India. For it still lingers in some parts of Bengal. But there can be no doubt that at present it is in a decrepit condition, and it was reduced to these straits soon after the twelfth century, that is, nearly a millennium and a half years after Aśoka. How therefore he can be held responsible for the extinction of Buddhism which took place at such a remote period after him is more than we can understand. Where is the proof, again, of his misdirected endowments to the Buddhist Church? Prof. Rhys Davids would, of course, have us

[1] *Buddhism*, p. 222.

place implicit trust in the Buddhist accounts, but the greater portion of them, at any rate so far as Aśoka is concerned, is anything but reliable. And even supposing for the moment that the Sinhalese and other monks have preserved the tradition correctly, where is the evidence of the spiritual impoverishment of the Buddhist clergy in the centuries immediately following Aśoka? No traces of the decadence of the Buddhist religion are perceptible till after the beginning of the Gupta period, that is, circa 350 A. D. Some scholars again liken Aśoka to Constantine, because both were the royal patrons of their respective religions and materially aided their dissemination.[1] But they forget that the circumstances under which Aśoka strove for the propagation of his faith were entirely different from those under which Constantine worked.[2] "Constantine espoused a winning cause," whereas Aśoka put himself at the head of a religion which had made little headway. Constantine was "calculating, shrewd, superstitious, often cruel, cynical—whose one great instance of consummate foresight entitles him to be called 'Great.'"[3] Aśoka, on the other hand, was possessed of a soul thoughtful,

[1] Hardy, *Asoka: Ein-charakter-Bild., etc.*, p. 30; Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, pp. 297-8; Rapson, *Ancient India*, p. 104.

[2] *Times Literary Supplement*, August 7, 1914.

[3] ERE., IV. 77.

all-compassionate, of lofty ideals, strenuous endeavour, singleness of purpose, and wonderful resourcefulness. "Constantine leaned to toleration for political purposes." Aśoka's toleration was a genuine commodity. In the last years of his life, Constantine displayed a reaction towards paganism, and at its best his religion was a 'strange jumble.' Aśoka never evinced such moral degeneration, and from beginning to end he held fast to the same Dhaṁma.

A second ruler whose name is coupled with that of Aśoka is Marcus Aurelius Antoninus,[1] another Roman emperor who flourished from 121 to 180 A.D. In respect of private high noble life there can be no doubt that he was Aśoka's equal, and, in point of mental culture, was even his superior. But, in regard to the sublimity of ideal and the display of unflagging and well-directed zeal, the Buddhist monarch surpasses the Roman emperor. Some admirers of Marcus Aurelius have no doubt said that his was a life subordinated to a love of mankind which was allied to religion. But it is forgotten that he was "Roman in civil nobility and pride, Roman in tenacity of imperial aim," and that he inflicted systematic persecution on Christians, just because "the prevalence of Christianity was incompatible with his ideal of Roman prosperity."[2] The life and

[1] Macphail, *Asoka*, p. 80; CHI., I, 509.

[2] EB., XVII., 695.

administration of the Buddhist monarch was not vitiated by any such narrow and sordid ideal or sullied by any such inhuman hostility to any section of the human race. On the contrary, he exerted himself strenuously and systematically for the good not only of the whole mankind but also the whole creature world, and no racial, national or family pride or bias marred his life of self-effacement.

Aśoka has been compared by one writer to a good many other princes, such as King Alfred, Charlemagne, Omar Khaliff I., and so forth.[1] There were many kings who were great warriors or great administrators like Aśoka. What, however, entitles Aśoka to world-wide and ever-lasting fame, is the temporal and spiritual good of the people that he accomplished. And no prince is worthy of being compared to Aśoka unless he has shared and exhibited in some appreciable measure this special characteristic of the Buddhist monarch. The only other ruler, therefore, whose name is worth mentioning along with his is Akbar, the Mogul emperor.[2] There can be no doubt that Akbar strove very hard for the welfare and happiness of his subjects, but the particular and important point in which he resembles Aśoka is the religious toleration he granted and the noble example he set to them

[1] Macphail, *Asoka*, pp. 80 and ff.

[2] ERE., II. 127.

in his sympathetic endeavour to ascertain the truth in every religion. We know what delight he took in listening to and presiding over the debates of the Ṣufī, the Sunnite, the Shī'ite, the the Brāhmaṇ, the (Jaina) Jati, the Buddhist, the Christian, the Jew, the Sabaean, the Zoroastrian, and others. We also know why he had held these discussions. " He is truly a man," he often said, " who makes Justice his leader in the path of inquiry, and who culls from every sect whatever Reason approves of. Perchance in this way that lock whose key has been lost may be opened." [1] The result of this eclecticism was the inauguration of a religion called " Divine Faith ", which was a monotheism, " combined with a worship of light and fire, especially as represented by the sun, which is not to be distinguished from the religion of the Parsis." In the case of Aśoka, we have seen that the result of his religious quest was the espousal of Buddhism slightly tinged by Jainism. But it is to be remembered that Akbar was " before all things a politician and a man of the world, and was in no mood to endanger his sovereignty for the cause of religious truth." Thus whenever he found that his innovations in religion were provoking rebellions among the Muhammadans, he stopped all religious discussion. He was not disposed,

[1] *Ibid.*, I., 269 and ff.

for instance, to listen to the Christian missionaries when his heresies were exciting a revolt in Bengal. Again, he was not tolerant all round. When a sect calling themselves *Ilāhis* sprang up, Akbar had its adherents arrested and deported to Sind and Afghānistān, where they were bartered for horses. Akbar's pursuit of religious enquiry was more or less of an academic nature, and when he proclaimed his "Divine Faith", there was also the motive of self-glorification behind it. He had absolutely no fire and enthusiasm for that religion, and, consequently though he was a mighty monarch, the Divine Faith did not spread beyond the royal court and died with its founder.

In the estimation of European historians, Alexander the Great, Cæsar and Napolean are the world's greatest monarchs. They were probably greater warriors and greater administrators than Aśoka even. But because they were great warriors and great administrators, does it follow that they were great men? Mr. H. G. Wells, author of "the Outline of History" had recently to consider this question. Just because this history is a history of life and mankind, all the characters that figure in it had to be considered from a different point of view and appraised according to a different standard, that is, the standard whether they rendered the world any way happier and better. In regard to

Alexander, Cæsar and Napolean, Mr. Wells therefore most pertinently asks: "what were their permanent contributions to humanity—these three who have appropriated to themselves so many of the pages of our history?"[1] What did Alexander create? Did he hellenize the east? No, hellenisation had begun long before his time. For a time the whole world from the Adriatic to the Indus was under his rule. Did he devise any plan to make this unification stable? Nothing of any definite nature that we know of. "As his power increased", remarks Mr. Wells, "his arrogance and violence grew with it. He drank hard and murdered ruthlessly. After a protracted drinking bout in Babylon a sudden fever came on him, and he died at the age of thirty-three. Almost immediately his empire began to break up. One custom remained to remind men of him. Previously most men had worn beards. But so great was Alexander's personal vanity that he would not let his face be covered. He shaved and so set a fashion in Greece and Italy which lasted many centuries. A good fashion, perhaps, but not a very significant contribution to the race."

As with Alexander, so with Cæsar. Historians say that he had something of the vision in him, and refer to his marvellous world policies.

[1] *The Strand Magazine*, September, 1922, pp. 216 and ff.

But what do we find him to be? Nothing but a dissolute and extravagant man. Just when he was at the height of his power and might have done much good to the world, if he was really endowed with the lofty vision with which he was credited, we find him feasting and frolicking in Egypt with that Siren Cleopatra for nearly a year, although he was then fifty-four. That brands him as a gross elderly sensualist, and not the master ruler of men. As regards Napolean this is what Mr. Wells says of him. "The old order of things was dead or dying; strange new forces drove through the world seeking form and direction; the promise of a world republic and enduring world peace whispered in a multitude of started minds. Had this man any profundity of vision, and power of creative imgination, had he been accessible to any disinterested ambition, he might have done work for mankind that would have made him the very sun of history............ There lacked nothing to the occasion but a noble imagination. And failing that, Napolean could do no more than strut upon the crest of this great mountain of opportunity like a cockerel on a dunghill."[1] Napolean may have done immense good to his country, but so far as his obligations to the human race are concerned, they are practically

[1] *The Outline of History*, p. 490.

nil. And Mr. Wells' estimate of him cannot be considered far from right.

As regards Aśoka we know what vision he was gifted with and how profound it was. It was the brotherhood, not simply, of human, but of living, being. To put the same thing in other words, he was overpowered with the vision of promoting the physical happiness and moral elevation of the whole world. And he displayed his creative imagination in suiting the means to his end, in a fashion which was at once novel and unique. The Mauryan empire was in the hey-dey of its glory when with a rare imagination Aśoka seized the opportunity of dedicating all his energies and all the state resources to the realisation of his noble end. Well might Mr. Wells therefore say of the Buddhist emperor that "amidst the tens and thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Aśoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory to-day than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne."[1] If, however, Aśoka is at

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

all to be likened to any monarch, it is not with one, but at least three, with whom he ought to be compared at one and the same time. And it is with Rev. Dr. Copleston[1] that we ought to say that "he was not merely the Constantine of Buddhism, he was Alexander with Buddhism for Hellas; an unselfish Napolean, with 'mettam' in the place of 'glorie'".

In the history of Buddhism Aśoka's importance is second only to that of the founder of that religion.[2] Saint Paul is therefore the only historical character that can rightly be compared to Aśoka, as has been correctly pointed out by Rev. Dr. J. M. Macphail.[3] It is true that the message preached by Jesus was for all mankind, but its universal character was not fully appreciated and emphasized by his immediate followers; and Christianity was thus deteriorating into but another, though more enlightened and liberal, sect of Judaism. It was Paul who broke the barriers of race and Law which were hemming it in. Some of his fellow preachers were no doubt for widening the door of the Christian Church so as to admit the gentiles. But Paul declared: "No, there must be, there is, no door, for there is no wall. Every partition has been broken down; every restriction and

[1] *Buddhism, Primitive and Present*, p. 166.
[2] ERE., II, 127.
[3] *Aśoka*, p. 85.

distinction, and division among men in the sight of God has been abolished. The love of God is as all-embracing as the sky above us; His grace is as free as the air we breathe. In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female." Similarly, in Aśoka's time Buddhism had almost degenerated into a local provincial sect. He destroyed the barriers which detached one sect from another, by teaching them tolerance and respect for one another's principles and tenets, and thus promoted the essence of religion which they all shared in common. And there can be no doubt that in this matter the royal teacher rose to a higher level than the Buddhist Piṭakas attained. This, in fact, was the message of Buddha to all lay people, and it was this universal character of Buddhism that Aśoka clearly perceived and emphasized. Like Paul, again, Aśoka was supremely concerned with the dynamic of conduct, and left no stone unturned in restoring his faith to its proper rank, to wit, that of a world religion. Aśoka was thus not a mere patron, but a veritable apostle of Buddhism. Being, however, at the head of a big empire and consequently master of inexhaustible resources, he was able to accomplish far quicker and more tangible results.

We cannot conclude our estimate of Aśoka's work unless we also inquire and determine how

it has affected India, that is, what gain or loss it has conferred or inflicted on that country. It cannot be denied that indirectly India has gained considerably. We have seen how the missionary activity of Aśoka was a source of two boons. In his time, the whole of the country had become Aryanised. But the different provinces had their different dialects. Owing, however, to the stupendous efforts put forth by him for the diffusion of his faith, the communication between one province and another became more frequent and brisk, and the universal desire of having a common language was felt—a language which would be studied and understood in all provinces and become the medium of exchange for thought not only in secular but also religious matters. This led to the acceptance of Pāli or monumental Prākṛit as the *lingua franca* of India.[1] Originally Pāli must have been some local dialect, not an artificial concocted speech, as supposed by some. Probably it was the parent of the Prākṛit which afterwards came to be known as Mahārāshṭrī. And when this was raised to the rank of a universal language for all India, not only secular and religious documents but religious scriptures came to be written in Pāli. Originally the Buddhist scriptures must have been preserved

[1] *Above*, pp. 202 and ff.

in the Māgadhī dialect, but when this new Esparanto arose, they were all translated into Pāli in order that they might be understood from one extremity of India to another. The official documents and the records of religious benefactions also came to be couched in that language. This was no doubt a great boon to India caused indirectly by the almost superhuman activity displayed by Aśoka for the spread of Buddhism. Another result of this activity was the immense stimulus it imparted to Indian art.[1] The architecture up to his time was mostly wooden, and it was he who made it lithic. The stone-cutter's art and industry had been flourishing since a remote past, and, when the idea of giving a permanent character to his *Dhaṁma-lipis* first dawned upon his mind, he at once jumped to the requisition of that art to serve his end. The effect of it was the construction of huge monolithic pillars, the inscribing of big rocks, and, above all, the excavation of rock-cut temples which gradually developed into higher and higher dimensions but also more and more artistic forms, and has studded India with such a number of beautiful and sublime specimens that they have rightly been regarded as one of the wonders of the world.

We have seen that Aśoka's contribution to

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 210 and ff.

humanity was the goal of cosmopolitanism that he placed before them, the brotherhood not merely of the human but of the living being. We have also seen how his missionary efforts were a source of two boons to this country. And it may now be reasonably asked whether Aśoka's activity affected India directly in any way and cast her genius in a different mould. This is the question before us now for our consideration. If we make a critical survey of the India of this period, we find that Hindu civilisation had attained a perfectly equipoised condition between the forces making for material progress and those conducing to spiritual culture. But this equipoise was disturbed by the unflagging zeal displayed by Aśoka and the unceasing efforts put forth by him for the realisation of his vision, and the result was that the material element of the Hindu civilisation was so completely subordinated to the spiritual that it soon became unprogressive and decadent though not extinct.

The above view may perhaps sound strange and appear to be a little exaggerated. For what does the literature developed up till the time of Aśoka show ? What conclusions do we come to from a study of the Vedic compositions and the Buddhist scriptures that were known in the time of this monarch ? What are the views expressed by savants, like the late Prof. Max Müller and Prof. Bloomfield, for instance, based

upon a careful and impartial study of these works especially of the Vedic period? Let us first see what Max Müller says. "The Indian", he remarks,[1] "never knew the feeling of nationality, and his heart never trembled in the expectation of national applause......The only sphere where the Indian mind found itself at liberty to act, to create, and to worship, was the sphere of religion and philosophy; and nowhere have religious and metaphysical ideas struck roots so deep in the mind of a nation as in India. The Hindus were a nation of philosophers...Taken as a whole, history supplies no second instance where the inward life of the soul has so completely absorbed all the practical faculties of a whole people, and, in fact, almost destroyed those qualities by which a nation gains its place in history". Prof. Bloomfield's view is practically the same. "From the beginning of India's history", says he,[2] "religious institutions control the character and the development of its people to an extent unknown elsewhere......Even though practices at all times fell short of this mechanical and exacting arrangement, yet the claim is allowed that life is an essentially solitary religious pilgrimage, the goal being personal salvation. There is no provision in such a scheme for the interest of the State and the

[1] HASL., pp 30-31.

[2] *The Religion of the Veda*, pp. 4-5.

development of the race. Unintentionally, but none the less effectively, they are left out of account, leaving a corresponding blank in India's national character." This is the view of the two savants regarding the cast of the Indian mind. They hold that the genius of India lay in the development of religious and philosophic culture and that she did not evolve any feeling of nationality and did not conceive the idea of the State. In other words, India made no contribution to the science of politics and has therefore no place in the political history of the world. There is, no doubt, some truth in this estimate of the Indian character, but the view is only partially true. Professor Max Müller and Bloomfield were certainly right when their views were first announced. But since their publication Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra has been recovered and is before the scholars for study. It is no longer correct to affirm that the Indians never freed their politics from the theological and metaphysical environment and set up political science as an independent branch of knowledge. For we learn from Kauṭilya that up till his time no less than four schools of the science of polity were known, and no less than seven individual authors of great eminence flourished, who were in no way connected with any schools. Again, what were the *vidyās* or sciences prevalent in his time? They were *ānvīkshakī*, Philosophy,

trayī, Theology, *vārtā*, Economics, and *daṇḍa-nīti*, Polity. Is it not clear from this that the science of polity was separated from philosophy and theology, and constituted an independent branch of study ? Nay, one school, namely, the Bārhaspatyas, went so far as to declare *trayī* or theology as a pious fraud, and another school to the extreme of reducing all the other sciences to the science of polity and laying down that polity alone was the one science properly so called. Does this not clearly show that before the advent of the Mauryan power the Indians cultivated the science of politics with as much boldness and alacrity as they did theology and philosophy and that if in much later times religion and metaphysics encroached upon the political science, there was also a time when not only was theology openly sneered at but polity considered to be the only science that deserved to be called a science. This is not the place to discuss what contribution the Hindus of the pre-Kauṭilyan period made to the political science, but those who have studied Kauṭilya's Artha-śāstra need not be told that the Indians had developed a definite conception of the State together with a fairly advanced idea of the International Law. Side by side with Polity the Hindus had developed another branch of learning called *vārtā* or Economics which concerned itself with 'agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade,'

and which was freely drawn upon by Polity for the furtherance of its object.

Though the Hindus had reached the conception of a special science called Polity and developed many and manifold concepts and principles which were even added to by Kauṭilya, it seems to have come to a dead stop soon after he wrote. This is clear from the fact that no work on Polity is known after Kauṭilya which contains any new idea or any kind of advance on the subject. In fact, Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, though it was more or less a compendium, seems to have superseded all the treatises on the Science of Polity that were known up to his time and to have been looked upon as the standard authority on the subject. Vātsyāyana of the *Kāma-sūtra* and the author of the *Yājñavalkya-smṛiti* have borrowed not only his ideas but even his phraseology. And the manner in which Bāṇa and Daṇḍin refer to Kauṭilya in their works leaves no doubt as to his treatise having become highly popular with the princes of their period.[1] But even this treatise was suspected to be somewhat unwieldily long, and, Kāmandaka, we know, set himself to the task of making it simpler and more concise. Surely Kāmandaka

[1] See *Preface* to *Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra* translated by Mr. R. Shamasastry; *Considerations of some aspects of Ancient Indian Polity* by K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, pp. 19 and ff. No cogent proof has yet been adduced to show that Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* is a later work.

would not have undertaken this task if Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra had not been the only work on Polity that was generally studied. There was no work on the subject composed after him which added to our knowledge of the Hindu Political Science. Evidently this science does not seem to have made any progress after Kauṭilya, and was practically dead just at a time when it was expected to make great strides and materially advance our political speculation and practice. We are all aware how the tiny State of Magadha in Behār in the time of Bimbisāra had developed into the mighty Magadha empire in the reign of Chandragupta, extending from the Hindukush to the frontiers of the Tāmil country. Aśoka himself had for a time aided this centripetal force that had originated with Bimbisāra, by conquering and annexing the province of Kaliṅga.[1] And if the vision of Dhaṁma had not haunted his mind and thus completely metamorphosed him, the irresistible martial spirit and the marvellous statecraft of Magadha would have found a vent only by invading and subjugating the Tāmil States and Tāmraparṇi towards the southern extremity of India, and would probably not have remained satisfied except by going beyond the confines of

[1] *Political History of Ancient India* by Dr. H. C. Raychaudhuri, pp. 164 & ff.: pp. 182-3.

Bhāratavarsha and establishing an empire like that of Rome. The Aryanisation of India had been completed long before Aśoka. This Aryanisation was to the different races of that country what Hellenism was to the non-Greek peoples. The Aryan speech and mode of life had already been assimilated almost all over India, and, even the *lingua franca*, namely, the Pāli language, was adopted. Here were present the solvents that were required for the fusion of the diverse Indian races into one nationality or rather imperialism. All that was now necessary to reach this consummation was political stability, that is, common political union. And if Aśoka had but continued the policy of his predecessors and helped the centripetal forces ushered in by Bimbisāra, his strong arm and administrative genius could have effectually consolidated the Magadha empire and ensured this political stability. As it was, he formulated a different foreign policy soon after the Kaliṅga war, that is, just after that event which would have stimulated other kings of his opportunity and resources to establish a world-dominion. The very idea of war Aśoka thereafter abhorred. We have seen how, in describing the horrors of the Kaliṅga war, he says that if one-hundredth, nay, one-thousandth, of that misery were to befall men again, that would be a cause of extreme regret to him. And it is with a

sense of relief and joy, as it were, that in another place he tells us that the sound of the drum has now become with him the sound of Dhaṁma, and not of war. But the incident of the Kaliṅga war he has mentioned with a purpose. There he naively confesses that he has abandoned all idea of *vijaya* or terrestrial conquest and adopted that of *Dhaṁma-vijaya* or conquest through Dhaṁma. This latter, says he, can with love and good will be achieved in all bordering regions, and has been so achieved by him, as he informs us. But he is not content with merely enunciating this new policy, but goes to the length of exhorting his sons, grandsons, and all his descendants to abandon all greed for terrestrial conquest, and follow in his foot-steps by continuing and completing the conquest through Dhaṁma inaugurated by him. The effects of this change of policy, of the replacement of *vijaya* by *Dhaṁma-vijaya* were politically disastrous though spiritually glorious. Love of peace and hankering after spiritual progress were no doubt engendered and have now been ingrained in the Indian character. The Hindu mind, which was already spiritual, became infinitely more spiritual. But that must have created some apathy to militarism, political greatness, and material well-being. This must be the reason why after Kauṭilya we find the progress of the political theory and practice suddenly impeded and

stunted, especially at a time when the Magadha State was expected to create the feeling of nationality and raise India to a higher political plane. Aśoka's new angle of vision, however, sounded a death-knell to the Indian aspiration of a centralised national state and world-wide empire. The effects of his policy were manifest soon after his death. Dark clouds began to gather in the north-western horizon, and hardly a quarter of a century had elapsed since his demise when the Bactrian Greeks crossed the Hindukush which formed the north-western boundary of the Mauryan dominions, and began to cause the decay of what was once a mighty empire. We know how much afraid the Greeks were of the Magadha army, even when they were led by Alexander. Three battles were enough for them to dismantle and destroy the fabric of the wide Achaemenian empire, but when they entered India, they had to fight every inch of their ground, and their very leader, Alexander, was once almost mortally wounded. Of course, the Greeks were a band of mighty and brave warriors, and succeeded, though with difficulty, in conquering many Indian tribes and even king Poros of the Punjab. But, as Plutarch tells us, the battle with Poros so much depressed the spirits of the Macedonians and made them so very unwilling to advance farther into India that they most resolutely opposed Alexander

when he insisted that they should cross the Ganges and encounter the Magadha forces.[1] The Macedonian monarch was much vexed and enraged, but had to retreat. Such was the dread which the Magadha army struck in the mind of the Macedonians. But it looks that owing to the new foreign policy inaugurated by Aśoka for the promotion of Dhaṁma, everything had suddenly changed, and the very Greeks who were in funks about the Magadha forces even when they were led by Alexander had little difficulty now in carrying their victorious arms into the heart of Northern India and disintegrating and dismembering the Magadha empire.

What is worse is that the Greek inroads, soon after the demise of Aśoka, for which his change of foreign policy appears to be responsible, opened a passage into India to the various wild hordes, such as the Śakas, Palhavas, Kushaṇas, Hūṇas, Gurjaras and so forth, whom we now find pouring unceasingly into the country till the sixth century A.D. and eclipsing the sovereignty of the indigenous rulers with such few exceptions only as the Śuṅgas and Guptas. It is true that these foreign tribes were all Hinduised soon after they were settled

[1] *Ancient India: Its Invasion by Alexander the Great* by MacCrindle, p. 310.

in India, but the fact can scarcely be contested that the political power of the country was practically monopolised by these foreigners up till the advent of the Muhammadans. The old Hindu genius for political originality and evolution thus remained dormant and died a natural death; and the world-dominion to which India at one time almost seemed to aspire resolved itself into a mere chimera.

Though, on account of the missionary activity of Aśoka, India, it appears, has been lost to nationalism and political greatness, she has doubtless gained in cosmopolitanism and humanitarianism which are the basic principles of Hindu society. It is true that as a consequence of this the progress of the Political Science was suddenly arrested, and that religion and philosophy began more and more to absorb the Hindu mind. It must not, however, be thought that the Hindu mind became completely averse or indifferent to the amenities of the worldly life or that India lost her importance commercially or industrially. Whether, on the whole, this is a gain or loss to India different people will decide according to their different temperaments. This much, however, is certain that the world has considerably gained by the missionary activity of this Indian monarch and that while to the Farther East Buddhism has given not only her religion and philosophy but also other

important features of the Hindu civilisation, it has exercised great influence not only son the Jewish sects of the Therapeutæ and Essenes but also on Christianity of the early period as well as of the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER VIII

ASOKA INSCRIPTIONS

A.—Their provenance, etc.

ROCK INSCRIPTIONS

(*a*) *The Fourteen Rock Edicts.*

Inscriptions of Aśoka have been engraved either on rocks, stone pillars or in caves. We shall first take up those called the Fourteen Rock Inscriptions or Edicts. These together form a set of fourteen different inscriptions following a serial order and have been found incised in seven different localities with a few slight variants and dialectical peculiarities. Commencing from the north-west, the first recension or group of these inscriptions is found at Shāhbāzgarhi in the Yusufzai subdivision of the Peshāwar District in the North-west Frontier Province, about 40 miles N. E. of Peshāwar. It was first made known by General Court who described it as being situated quite close to Kapurdagarhi after which it was formerly known as the Kapurdagarhi recension. Kapurdagarhi, however, is two miles distant, and the rock is actually within the boundary of the very much larger village of Shāhbāzgarhi, from which it is

less than half a mile distant. The larger portion of the record, containing all the inscriptions except the twelfth, is engraved on both the eastern and western faces of a mass of trap rock, 24 feet long, 10 feet high and 10 feet thick, and lying about 80 feet up the slope of the hill with its western face looking down towards the village of Shāhbāzgarhi. Edict XII. of this recension was however discovered as late as 1889 by the late Sir Harold Deane, and is engraved on a separate piece of rock about 50 yards distant from the main record. Shāhbāzgarhi is a modern name, but the present village is the site of a very old and extensive city, and, according to Cunningham, represents the ancient city of Po-lu-sha (Yuan Chwang) or Fo-sha-fu (Sungyun)[1]—a famous Buddhist Tīrtha, the scene of the Wessantara Jātaka. It was probably the capital of the Yavana province comprised in Aśokan dominions.

The next recension in order is that at Mānsahrā (Manserā) in the Hazara District of the North-west Frontier Province, about 15 miles north of Abbottabad. Here the first twelve edicts only have been found incised on two rocks. The thirteenth and fourteenth edicts are probably hidden somewhere in the vicinity and still await discovery. There are no

[1] C. ASR., V. 8-23; C. CII., I. 8-12.

vestiges of any old habitation in the neighbourhood, but as pointed out by Sir A. Stein, the record seems to have been engraved on a rock lying by an ancient road leading to a place of pilgrimage now called Brerī, which is the Kashmīrī equivalent of Bhaṭṭārikā=Devī or Durgā.[1] We have seen that Edict XII. of the Shāhbāzgarhī copy is engraved on a separate rock, whereas the same inscription in the Mānsahrā version is incised on one side of the rock. At both these places, again, the characters are larger, and the engraving more accurate, than those of any other edict. There can be no doubt, as first pointed out by Senart,[2] that special prominence seems to have been attached, on this side of India, at any rate, to Edict XII., which insists upon toleration being shown by one religious sect to another. It appears as if, in the eyes of king Aśoka, counsels of religious peace were specially necessary in this extreme region of the north-west of his empire, which, being the main route of the invasions into India, must always have been the meeting place of diverse races, divided by religious ideas.

The third copy of the Fourteen Rock Edicts is engraved on a huge boulder of quartz on the western bank of the Jumna just above her junction with the Tons river and about fifteen

[1] PR.—ASNWFP., 1904-5, p. 17.

[2] I.A., 1890, p. 43.

miles to the west of Mussoorie (Mansurī). The rock is situated about a mile and a half of Kālsī in the Dehra Dun District, U. P., which is the nearest village to it and after which the inscription is called Kālsī Recension. The boulder is 10 ft. long, 10 ft. high, and about 8 ft. thick at the bottom. The south-eastern face has been smoothed, but rather unevenly, as it follows the undulations of the original surface.[1] It was originally discovered by Mr. Forrest in 1860. The letters of the inscription were then hardly visible, the whole surface being encrusted with the dark moss of ages. At first sight, the inscription looks as if it was imperfect in many places, but this is owing to the engraver having purposely left all the cracked and rougher portions uninscribed. Towards the bottom, beginning with the 10th edict, the letters increase in size until they become about thrice as large as those of the upper part. Owing either to this enlargement of the letters, or, perhaps, to the latter part of the inscription being of later date, the prepared surface was too small for the whole record which was therefore completed on the left-hand side of the rock. On the right-hand side is traced in outline one elephant labelled *Gajatama*= 'the superlative elephant,' referring, of course, to Buddha.[2]

[1] C. ASR., I. 244; C. CII., I. 12-13.

[2] IA., V. 257-8.

There are many sculptured stones lying about close to the rock indicating the former existence of structures in the neighbourhood, and the place itself was certainly situated near the ancient and prosperous city of Śrughna.

The fourth copy is the famous Girnār version, first described by Colonel Tod in 1822. It is inscribed on the north-eastern face of the large rock on the road to the Girnār hill, half a mile to the east of the city of Junāgaḍh in Kāṭhiāwāṛ. Girnār is the same as Girinagara, which was for long the capital of Surāshṭra. The *Prabhāsakhaṇḍa* describes Girnār as a Śaiva *tīrtha*. It is also one of the places highly venerated by the Jainas. The record remained buried in a dense forest and might never have come to light, had not a local notable made a causeway through the jungle for the benefit of pilgrims.[1] The inscription consists of two main divisions which are separated by a line drawn from the top of the rock downwards. To the left are engraved the first five edicts, and to the right the next seven edicts from 6-12. The 13th edict is placed below, and on its right is the 14th edict. The preservation is good, except where a portion of the stone, containing the 5th and 13th edicts, has been destroyed, it is said, during the blasting operations carried out to furnish material for the causeway referred to above.

[1] ASWI., II. 95 ; PR.—ASWI., 1898-9, p. 15.

By turning up the soil close by, Captain Postans before 1877 recovered numerous fragments of the rock among which were two pieces bearing Aśokan letters, no doubt pertaining to Edict XIII., described and deciphered later on in JRAS., 1900, pp. 335 and ff. The edicts are separated from one another by horizontal lines drawn right across. Below Edict XIII., separated by an indentation, was engraved......*va sveto hasti savaloka-sukhāharo nāma* (=' the white elephant whose name is the bringer of happiness to the whole world'), where Prof. Kern was the first to recognise an unmistakable reference to Buddha. It is possible there was here originally some stone representation of elephant similar to those found at Dhauli and Kālsī.

On the same rock are also inscribed the record of Rudradāman (A.D. 150) and that of Skandagupta (A. D. 457), informing us that in its vicinity was constructed under the orders of Chandragupta Maurya, a lake named Sudarśana which was equipped with watercourses and sluices by the local representatives of the Mauryan dynasty and which was twice repaired, once in the reign of Rudradāman and once again in the reign of Skandagupta.

The discovery of a fragment containing a few words from Edict VIII. is enough to prove that a copy of this set of documents once existed at Sopārā in the Ṭhāṇā District, to the north of

Bombay.[1] Sopārā, still a prosperous town, was an important port and mart under the name of Śūrpāraka (Mahābhārata), Suppara (Periplus), or Soupara (Ptolemy). The Mahābhārata seems to state that it was founded by Paraśurāma, and mention is made there of Rāma-tīrtha.[2] It was a very holy place and for long the capital of Aparānta.

Two copies[3] exist on the eastern side of India, near the coast of the Bay of Bengal, within the limits of the kingdom of Kaliṅga conquered by Aśoka 'when he had been consecrated eight years.' The northern copy (discovered by Mr. Kittoe in 1837) is inscribed on a rock called Aswastama, situated close to the village of Dhauli (the town of Tosali mentioned in the edicts as the seat of a Kumāra viceroyalty) about seven miles to the south of Bhuvaneśvar, in the Purī District, Orissa. The Aśoka inscriptions are arranged in three parallel vertical columns, of which the Fourteen Rock Edicts (minus Edicts XII. and XIII.) occupy the whole of the middle column and one-half of the right column. Afterwards two local edicts were added, one completing the right-hand column, and the other filling the whole of the left-hand column. The latter is, therefore, the second of the two

[1] JBBRAS., XV., 282 and ff.; PR.—ASWI., 1897-8, pp. 7 and ff.

[2] IA., 1882, p. 236.

[3] C. ASR., XIII. 95 and 112; C. CII., I. 15 and ff.

separate Edicts here. Immediately above the inscription is a terrace, on the right side of which is the fore-part of an elephant, 4 feet high, of superior workmanship; the whole is hewn out of the solid rock. From the grooves traceable here, the elephant seems originally to have been protected by a wooden canopy. The southern version (first copied by Sir Walter Elliot in 1850) is engraved on the face of a 'picturesque' rock in a large old fort called Jaugaḍā (Lac-fort), near the bank of Ṛishikulyā river, about eighteen miles to the west-north-west of the town of Ganjām. The Jaugaḍā inscriptions are engraved on three different tablets on the vertical face of the rock. The first contains the first five edicts, but about one-half has been utterly lost by the peeling away of the rock. The second tablet comprises the next five edicts and Edict XIV. About one-third of this tablet has been mutilated. The third tablet contains the two separate Edicts which are found at Dhauli. These are less carefully engraved than those on the other two tablets.

Separate Kaliṅga Edicts.

Two separate edicts, the Borderers' Edict and the Provincials' Edict, take the place of Edicts XII-XIII. of the ordinary series, at Dhauli and Jaugaḍā.

(b) *The Minor Rock Edicts.*

At first, only three copies of these Edicts were known, what may be called the three northern versions.[1] Of these one is engraved on a rock in an artificial cave near the summit of the Chandanpīr hill to the east of Sahasrām (Shāhābād District, Bihār), now surmounted by a shrine of the Muhammadan Pir (saint) after whom it is named.[2] Smith says that in Aśoka's time the place must have been visited by the Hindu pilgrims. But this is a mere conjecture. Another copy is inscribed on the Rūpnāth rock (Jabalpur District, Central Provinces), lying at the foot of the Kaimur range of hills. The spot is no doubt visited at present by pilgrims who worship the local deity, Rūpnāth (Śiva), and bathe in the three sacred pools named after Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā. The third northern version, discovered by Carlleyle in 1872-73, is engraved on a huge isolated block standing at the foot of a hill called the Hinsagir hill near the ancient city of Bairāṭ (Jaipur State, Rājputānā), where the Pāṇḍavas are said to have lived during the concluding portion of their exile. The surface of the rock is rough, and has suffered much from weathering. Of

[1] C.ASR., VI. 98; VII. 58; IX. 38; and XI. 133; C. CII., I. 20-4; PR.—ASWI., 1903-4, pp. 35-6; AR.— ASEC., 1907-8, p. 19.

[2] EC., XI. 1—5 (Intro.).

the southern version three were discovered in 1892 by Mr. B. Lewis Rice[1] incised in three localities, all close to one another, in the Chitaldrug District of Mysore, namely, Śiddāpur, Jaṭinga-Rāmeśvar and Brahmagiri, not far from the site of an ancient locality (probably Isila of the Edict). The Mysore versions alone contain each a short supplementary edict giving a summary of Aśoka's Dhaṁma. The discovery of these inscriptions for the first time clearly showed that Aśoka's empire had spread as far south as Mysore. The fourth southern version is the Maski Minor Rock Edict discovered in 1915.[1] It is in the District of Raichur, Nizam's Dominions. Though it is in a mutilated condition, it is a very important inscription as it is the only record thāt actually names Aśoka as its issuer, the other epigraphs ascribing themselves to Priyadarśin, another name of that king.

Pillar Inscriptions.

(*a*) *The Seven Pillar Edicts.*

The inscribed pillars of Aśoka have long been known to the Europeans owing to the favourite positions which they occupy in the very heart of the empire.[2] Of these the best

[1] HAS., no. 1, pp. 1-2.

[2] C. ASR., I. 67, 73, 161, 298; V. 143; XIV, 78; XVI. 110; XXII. 51. C. CII., I. 34 & ff.

known, and the earliest to be noticed by Europeans is the Delhi (Sivālik, or Toprā) Pillar, commonly known as Firozshah's *lāṭ*. According to Shams-i-Siraj, a contemporary of Sultan Firoz Tughlak, this pillar was brought (A. D. 1356) by the Sultan, from a place called Topra (v.l. Tohera, Tamera, Nahera, etc.) on the bank of the Jumna, which was at the foot of the mountains, ninety *kos* from Delhi, and was erected on the summit of Kothila in Firozabad. It contains *seven* "pillar-edicts" whereas the other pillars contain six only. The first eleven lines of the seventh Edict have been incised on the eastern face of the column and the remaining round the whole of the shaft. This inscription is a later addition, as is clearly shown by the fact that it has been engraved in thinner and less carefully formed letters, many of which, again, have a sloping or cursive form.

The second of Aśoka's Delhi pillars, according to Shams-i-Siraj, was brought from Mirath (Meerat) by the same Sultan and was set up near the "Hunting Palace," which, we know, was situated on the Ridge to the north-west of the modern city. According to the popular belief, the pillar was thrown down by an accidental explosion of a powder magazine in the reign of Farokhsir (1713-19 A. D.). The inscribed portion of this fallen shaft was once in the Museum of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

But this piece was afterwards returned to Delhi, and the pillar again set up (1867 A. D.) in its old position. The inscriptions on this pillar are very imperfect, partly owing to its mutilation, and partly to the worn surface of the existing pieces.

The Allāhābād pillar now stands near Ellenborough Barrack in the Fort. It is inscribed also with two minor edicts of Aśoka, and as one of these is addressed to the officials at Kauśāmbī, the pillar appears to have been originally set up in that ancient city identified with Kosam on the Jumna, about 30 miles south of west from Allāhābād. This pillar contains Samudragupta's *praśasti* also. Jahangir ruthlessly destroyed, by his vainglorious inscription, the third and fourth edicts of Aśoka. Shortly before his time, however, the pillar had been removed to Prayāga, and it is surmised that it was brought there by Firoz Tughlak who, we know, was responsible for the removal of at least two Aśoka columns to Delhi.

In the Champāraṇ District of North Behār, there are three pillars inscribed with edicts of this series. The Lauriyā Ararāj (or Rādhiah) pillar is situated close to the small hamlet of Lauriyā, at a distance of one mile to the south-west of the much frequented Hindu temple of Ararāj-Mahādev, two miles and a half to the east-south-east of the village of Rādhiā and twenty

miles to the north-west of the Kesāriā *Stūpa*, on the way to Bettiā. Proceeding from this spot and going N. W. towards Nepāl, one will see the graceful Lauriyā Nandangarh or Māthiah pillar which is the only one of Aśoka's columns which still retains its original capital. It stands near the large village of Lauriyā, 3 miles north of Māthiah and very close to the ancient site of Nandangarh, the remarkable ruins of which date, according to Dr. Bloch,[1] from pre-Mauryan period and where has been located the sacred site of the 'Charcoal Stupa' of Pippalavana. A Persian inscription dated 1071 (A. D. 1660-1) recording the name of *Mahiuddīn Muhammad Aurangzib Pādshāh Alamgīr Ghāzi* was probably inscribed by some zealous Moslem in Mir Jumla's army, which was then on its return from Bengal, whose attempt to demolish the Kafer monument is still visible in the form of the round mark of a cannon shot just below the capital. Some twenty miles N. N. E. of it is the Rāmapurwā hamlet and more than a mile N. E. of Pipariā village.[2] The Champāraṇ pillars were supposed by the late Dr. Smith[3] to have marked the course of the royal road from the northern bank of the Ganges opposite the capital to the Nepāl valley.

[1] ASI.-AR., 1906-7, p. 119 and

[3] Ibid, 1907-8, pp. 181 and ff.

[2] Asoka, p. 120.

(b) *The Minor Pillar Edicts.*

The Allāhābād pillar contains two minor edicts—the Queen's Edict and the Edict specifying the penalty of schism in the Church. Of the Queen's Edict we have no other version. But besides the mutilated version of Allāhābād and Sāñchi [1] (inscribed on a fallen and broken pillar at the southern entrance to the Great Stūpa of Sāñchi in Bhopāl State, Central India), the Edict on the penalty of schism in the Church is also preserved in the nearly complete and fuller version engraved on the Sārnāth Pillar [2] discovered by Mr. Oertel in 1905, at Sārnāth about 3½ miles N. of Benares.

The most important of the minor pillars of Aśoka is the Rummindeî pillar standing at the shrine of Rummindeî about one mile north of Paderia and 2 miles north of Bhagwānpur in the Nepalese Tashil of that name situated to the north of the British District of Basti.[3] The commemorative record inscribed on it states that Lord Buddha, the Śākya sage, was born there. It thus locates the famous Lumbinī grove, the birthplace of Buddha. A similar commemorative pillar is that discovered on the western bank of Niglīva Sagar, near the village of Niglīva in the

[1] *A Guide to Sanchi*, pp. 90 and ff.

[2] ASI.—AR., 1904-5, pp. 68 and ff.

[3] Führer's *An. Prog. Rep.*, 1894-95, para, 3; JRAS., 1897, pp. 429 and ff; pp. 365 and ff.

Nepalese Tarāi to the north of the Basti District. The inscription on this pillar, now situated at a distance of about 13 miles to the north-west of the last-mentioned pillar, records that it was erected to mark the site of the *stūpa* of Konāgamana.

Cave Inscriptons.

The famous caves of Barābar and Nāgārjunī are situated sixteen miles due north of Gayā, or nineteen miles by the road, in two separate groups of hills on the left or west bank of the Phalgu river.[1] There are four caves in the Barābar hill. Three of them have their walls inscribed with Aśoka characters, informing us that these caves were dedicated by king Piyadasi to the Ajīvikas.

So much for the *provenance* of the various inscriptions of Aśoka. We have now to consider other questions connected with them. First, what are the forms of stone on which they were engraved? How are they spoken of by Aśoka? At the end of PE. VII. he refers to *śilā-stambha* and *śilā-phalaka*. The first obviously represent the stone pillars, and we know that many of his records were inscribed on them. *Śilā-phalaka* signify 'the stone slabs,' but except perhaps the Bhābrū Edict, [2] no inscription of Aśoka has yet

been found incised on a stone slab. About the end of the Sahasarām and Rūpnāth Edicts we meet with the words *śilā-stambha* and *parvata.* The last of these must refer to such rocks as have been inscribed with not only his Minor Rock Edicts but also Fourteen Rock Edicts. And, as a matter of fact, the Dhauli and Jaugaḍā versions of the last series speak of their having been engraved on a *parvata.* The name of the *parvata* was in each case specified, but that in the Jaugaḍā copy is alone preserved, and that is Khapiṁgala. It will thus be seen that Aśoka caused his records to be incised on a three-fold material, namely, rock, stone pillar and stone slab.

The second question that we have now to consider is: how does Aśoka speak of his inscriptions? By what names does he refer to them? Those who have studied the Fourteen Rock and the Seven Pillar Edicts know full well that they have been designated Dhaṁma-lipis by him. What does this phrase mean? We have seen above that Aśoka is very fond of instituting a comparison between his Dhaṁma and the ordinary practices of life. Thus he compares *vijaya* with Dhaṁma-vijaya, *maṅgala* with Dhaṁma-maṅgala, *dāna* with Dhaṁma-dāna, and so forth. We also know that he distinguishes between ordinary Mahāmātras and Dhaṁma-Mahāmātras. The same must have been the case with Dhṁma-lipis,

lipis. Now, *lipi* is a word which signifies a 'writ' or 'record,' and is found employed in this sense not only in the Separate Kaliṅga Edicts but also Sārnāth Pillar Edict. The use of this word, especially in the last inscription, is of special importance. This Edict, it is worthy of note, calls itself a *śāsana* or Order, and yet we are told that two *lipis* of it were to be deposited —one for the guidance of the Officials and the other for the Buddhist laity. *Lipi* cannot but mean 'a record' here. As king, Aśoka must have issued a great many decrees relating to secular matters. And the writings conveying those decrees are obviously *lipis*. And further as he was also a preacher, he must have issued similar decrees for the advancement of Dhaṁma. These can therefore most appropriately be called *Dhaṁma-lipi*. It is true that the Fourteen Rock and the Seven Pillar Edicts alone have been styled *Dhaṁma lipi*; but it does not follow that the other inscriptions of Aśoka, except perhaps those engraved in the caves, were not so. All these epigraphs were records relating to the promotion and propagation of Dhaṁma and can with perfect propriety be designated *Dhaṁma-lipi*.

The third question that we have to discuss is the dates at which the different records were engraved. Here so far as the Seven Pillar Edicts are concerned, we are on perfectly safe grounds. Pillar Edict I. begins by informing us

that that Dhaṁma-lipi was engraved in the twenty-sixth year of Aśoka's reign; and Pillar Edict VI. ends by giving precisely the same date for its incision. There can absolutely be no doubt that the first six edicts of this series were inscribed in the twenty-sixth regnal year of Aśoka. As regards Pillar Edict VII., which is found only on the Delhi (-Ṭoprā) Pillar, we know that about the close of this record we have the specific year 27 as the date of its incision. It is quite clear from this that the last edict was engraved one year later and that it is a subsequent addition. That it is a subsequent addition may be seen also from the fact that the letters of this epigraph are of an entirely different type from those of the preceding six edicts, as we have already observed in our notice of the Pillar on which it is engraved. Though there is thus a perfect certainty about the dates of these Pillar Edicts, the same thing cannot unfortunately be said in regard to the other records, not even in regard to the Fourteen Rock Edicts. It is true that no less than four different dates are found mentioned in this series (RE. IV., V., VIII. & XIII.), but it is nowhere stated that this whole set of Dhaṁma-lipis or any component thereof was inscribed in any particular year. They are dates of the different events alluded to in the different parts of this series, and not of the actual engraving. The latest of these is the thirteenth year of Aśoka's reign, and

this has been proposed by M. Senart as the date when the Fourteen Rock Edicts were incised. The French savant, it is true, has been followed by other scholars, both Indian and European. But this date cannot reasonably be taken as the actual date of the inscribing. All that we can logically conclude is, not that the whole set was engraved in the thirteenth regnal year, but only that it could not have been engraved before that year. We have, therefore, to fix the date for this series on independent grounds. If it cannot be fixed with any certainty, we shall do so at least approximately. The line of argument we have to adopt in this connection has already been indicated above.[1] Pillar Edict VII. has been looked upon by all scholars as giving a resumé of the measures that Aśoka devised and followed for the promotion of Dhaṁma up to the twenty-seventh year of his reign, which we have just seen, is the date of that edict. But we find absolutely no reference made in it to the works of charity he executed in and outside India and which have been described in Rock Edict II. or to the successes which crowned his missionary efforts, as we learn from Rock Edict XIII., not only in his empire but also in the dominions of his neighbouring sovereigns, Greek and Indian. Both these matters are of such paramount importance in Aśoka's estimation that he would

[1] *Above*, p. 47, n. 1.

never have failed to make mention of them in Pillar Edict VII., if he had known about them before the twenty-seventh year, the date of that edict. We are, therefore, compelled to infer that Rock Edicts II., and XIII., in fact, the whole set of the Fourteen Rock Edicts, came to be engraved after the Seven Pillar Edicts were incised. Other considerations also point to the same conclusion. As we have noted above, in Pillar Edict VII. while Aśoka is describing the various means he adopted for the dissemination of his faith, he refers to the erection of the *Dhaṁma-thaṁbhas* as one of those means. And at the close of it, as we have also seen, he speaks of the same Dhaṁma-lipi as having been ordered to be inscribed on stone pillars and stone slabs. There is, indeed, no reference here to the inscribing of Dhaṁma-lipis on *parvatas* or rocks. The idea does not seem to have occurred to him till after the twenty-seventh year of his reign, the date of Pillar Edict VII. This shows that all his Rock Edicts, whether they are the Fourteen Rock Edicts or the Minor Rock Edicts, must have been engraved when the work of inscribing the Seven Pillar Edicts came to an end.

As regards the question: which were first inscribed—the Fourteen Rock Edicts or the Minor Rock Edicts, it deserves to be noticed, as we have seen, that in the Sahasarām and Rūpnāth epigraphs Aśoka orders that edict to be

inscribed wherever a stone pillar or a *parvata* is found. This shows that the idea of inscribing rocks or pillars was new to him at that time, as otherwise there can be no propriety in his issuing that order. It seems therefore that as soon as the pillars were engraved, Aśoka took up the work of incising Minor Rock Edicts, which must have been followed by that of the Fourteen Rock Edicts. When the latter series was being inscribed, the idea of engraving rocks as well as pillars had become so familiar that Aśoka makes absolutely no reference to either and that if he makes any reference at all to such material, he makes the general remark that those (Fourteen) Rock Edicts were engraved on stone in order that they might endure permanently.

After a hard strenuous missionary career of at least fourteen years, the idea first occurred to Aśoka of inscribing on imperishable stone his manifold thoughts about Dhaṁma and the various measures he adopted for its propagation. We have seen already why this idea commended itself to his mind.[1] His object evidently was that if he gave in a lithic form a succinct account of the activities of his career as a missionary, it would be preserved for his remote descendants to see, read and reflect upon, and would stimulate them to push forward, over the whole world, the *Dhaṁma-vijaya* or conquest

[1] Above, pp. 149-50.

through Dhaṁma, which was inaugurated by him with such *eclát*. The different parts of his Dhaṁma-lipis, whether we take the Fourteen Rock Edicts or the Seven Pillar Edicts, are by no means bound together by any natural order. Aśoka perhaps was in such a hurry to preserve an account of his missionary life in a durable form that he put together the different components of his series of epigraphs without any connected sequence. Nevertheless, we are exceedingly obliged to the Buddhist monarch that he at all conceived and forthwith executed the idea of transmitting to posterity in an enduring form the thoughts, feelings and motives that agitated, animated and guided his soul and, above all, galvanised him into an all-around and unflagging activity to promote not only the temporal but also the spiritual weal of mankind.

B.—Translation, Notes, etc.

Introductory Note.

Many are the scholars who have dealt with the Aśoka inscriptions since the second quarter of the 19th century. The labours of Prinsep, Wilson and Burnouf, the pioneers of Indian epigraphy, were brought together in 1877 by Sir Alexander Cunningham in the handy form of *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I. But they have now become more or less obsolete on account of the faultiness of their texts,

Some new inscriptions have been discovered and also many of the old known records have been differently read and interpreted since this volume was published. An exhaustive list of references to all publications brought out up till 1902, is contained in R. Otto Franke's *Pali und Sanskit*, Strassburg, 1902, pp. 1-5. Aśoka inscriptions are a literature by themselves, and very few indeed are the scholars who have edited and annotated his whole set of epigraphs. The following are the only works that will generally be useful to a student of these inscriptions.

Senart, Emile—*Les Inscriptiones de Piyadasi* (Paris, in two vols.). Though this edition has suffered from faulty texts and later discoveries and researches, it is still considered to be an important work which no student can afford to ignore.

Bühler, George—*Beitrage zur Erklärung der Aśoka-Inscriften* (Leipzig, 1909), offprint from ZDMG., 1883-1894. This gives many improved readings and emended translations, together with useful notes. This work is indispensable. Part of it in English garb was published in EI., Vol. I, pp. 16-20, and Vol. II, pp. 245-274 & 447-72; ASSI., Vol. I, pp. 114-125.

Smith, V.A.—*Aśoka, the Buddhist Emperor of India* (3rd Ed., 1920), Chapters IV-V. This, however, contains only translations and

comments, and gives no text of the records. This is a carefully prepared compilation, and serves as a useful handbook.

Hultzsch, E.—The new revised edition of the inscriptions which was begun as early as 1912 but was indefinitely delayed on account of the war is now very nearly complete, and will before long be accessible to scholars. It is expected to settle many controverted matters about the text and interpretation.

Different articles by different scholars have been published from time to time, either annotating single words or passages from the Aśoka Inscriptions or dealing with special questions connected with them. They are too numerous to mention here, but will be referred to in the following pages as occasion arises. There are also some papers of T. Michelson published in *Indo-Germ. Forschungen*, 1908, 1910, 1911; *Amer. Jour. Philology*, 1909, 1910; and JAOS., 1911. But they are concerned more with textual criticism and questions of phonetics than with interpretation.

(a) THE FOURTEEN ROCK EDICTS.

I.

Translation.

This *Dhaṁma-lipi*[1] was caused to be engraved by king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods.[2] No animal should here[3] be immolated and offered as a sacrifice; nor should any *samāja*[4] be held: for king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, sees much evil in a *samāja*. There are, however, certain *samājas*, which are considered excellent by Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods.

Formerly in the kitchen of king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, many hundreds of thousands of animals were every day slaughtered for curry.[5] But now when this *Dhaṁma-lipi* was written, only three animals were being killed[6] for curry, namely, two peacocks and one deer; but even that deer not regularly. Even these three animals will not be afterwards killed.

Notes.

1 The phrase *dhaṁma-lipi*, which occurs in this as well as in many other Aśoka inscriptions, has been translated 'righteousness-edict' by Kern, simply 'edict' by Senart, and 'religious edict' by Bühler. Strictly speaking, *lipi*, means a *lekha*, 'a writ,' 'a record' (not 'a decree, edict'), and can be taken in this sense alone in the Sārnāth pillar

inscription. *Dhaṁma*, again, here means not only 'righteousness' but also 'acts of charity and measures for fostering righteousness.' The word had better remain untranslated. *Above*, pp. 264-5.

[2] On Pāṇini, VI. 3. 21, which deals with the genitive *aluk-samāsa*, Kātyāyana has the Vārtika: *devānāṁ-priya iti cha*. From this it is plain that in the time of the Vārtikakāra, the words *devānāṁ-priya* had come into use, and was looked upon as one word. In his gloss on the Vārtika: *bhavad-ādiyogaḥ* appended to Pāṇini, V. 3. 14, Patañjali includes *devānāṁ-priya* under the *bhavadādigaṇa*. This indicates that like the words *bhavat*, *dīrghāyus* and *āyushmat* comprised in this Gaṇa, *devānāṁ-priya* was employed as an auspicious mode of address or characterisation (JBBRAS., XXI, 393). But it is worthy of note that the term was even at this early period used in an ironical sense as is clear from the *Vārtika* of Kātyāyana just referred to. In later times, however, the word always conveyed a derogatory signification (JRAS., 1908, pp. 504-5).

Although *devānāṁ-priya* of some copies of Rock Edict VIII. corresponds to *rājāno* of others, it is not correct to regard the former as synonymous with the latter, as V. A. Smith appears to have done (JRAS, 1901, 486 & 577). For, *rāja*, which is conjoined to the name of Priyadarśin, together with *devānāṁ-priya*, would in that case be superfluous. Again, the rendering 'his sacred majesty,' which he has proposed for *devānāṁ-priya* cannot commend itself to any one, as the phrase 'his sacred majesty' can be applied more appropriately to the head of a religious establishment, such, *e.g.*, as the Pope of Europe or the 'Śaṅkarāchāryas' of India, but can seldom be used with propriety with reference to a secular king in general.

[3] The word *iha* has been taken by some to mean "here, that is, on this earth," and by others "here, that is, in Pāṭaliputra." But it had rather be taken to denote his "palace and royal establishment," because all the other items mentioned in this edict are connected with either Aśoka personally or his royal household. He may therefore be supposed to have prohibited the performance of sacrifice not universally in his empire but only so far as he and his family were concerned.

[4] The real sense of *samāja* was unknown to scholars till it was first pointed out in JBBRAS., XXI. 395 ff. A more detailed note by me on the same subject will be found in IA., 1913, 255 & ff. Some addition to our knowledge of the exact nature of a *samāja* has recently been made by F. W. Thomas in JRAS., 1914, 392-4 and 752. See also N. G. Majumdar, IA., 1918, pp. 221-3. The word was interpreted by Senart as denoting 'a convivial assembly' (IA., IX. 286), by Pischel 'a battue' (*Gott. Gel. Anz.*, 1881, p. 1324), and by Bühler 'a festive assembly' (EI., II. 466). None of these scholars was, however, able to substantiate his meaning by any literary evidence or to show why some *samājas* were condemned and some extolled by Aśoka in an inscription directed against the slaughter of animals. This point has been clearly set forth, *Above*, pp. 20-21 and p. 137.

[5] The question arises: Why did this daily slaughter of hundreds of thousand animals take place in the royal kitchen of Aśoka before the inscription was engraved? Attention may in this connection be invited to IA., 1913, pp. 255 & ff., and also *Above*, pp. 21-2.

[6] Notice that the Aorist form *ārabhisu* (=*ārabhiṁsu*) and the Perfect form *ārabhare* (=*ārabhire*) have been promiscuously used. This Perfect form is interesting, because it is not met with in literary Pāli. It does not, however, seem to have disappeared from the popular speech. Mark also the perfect form *ayāya* in RE., VIII. (Girnār version).

II.

Translation.

Everywhere in the dominions of king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, as well as of those of his frontier sovereigns, such as the Choḍas,[1] Pāṇḍyas, Sātiyaputra, Keralaputra, as far as the Tāmraparṇi, the Yona (Greek) king called Aṁtiyaka (Antiochus) and also those who are the neighbours [2] of Aṁtiyaka (Antiochus)—

everywhere has king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, established medical treatment[3] of two kinds,—that wholesome for men and that wholesome for animals. Where medicinal herbs, wholesome for men and wholesome for animals, are not found, they have everywhere been imported and planted. Roots and fruits, wherever they are not found, have been imported and planted. On the roads wells have been caused to be dug, and trees caused to be planted for the enjoyment of man and beast.

Notes.

[1] *Above*, pp. 38 & ff. For Paṁḍiya (Pāṇḍya) see also CL., 1918, pp. 10-11.

In regard to Sātiyaputra, R. G. Bhandarkar draws attention to the fact that along the westernmost portion of the Deccan tableland we have Marāṭhā, Kāyastha, and Brāhman families, bearing the surname Sātpute, which seems to be derived from the Sātiyaputta of this inscription. The independent state of Sātiyaputra may, therefore, have been situated along the Western Ghauts and the Konkan Coast below (*Ind. Review*, 1909, pp. 401 & ff.) Bühler, however, identifies Sātiyas with Sātvats mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII. 14 and included in the *Parśvādi-gaṇa* referred to in Pāṇini, V. 3. 117 (*Beiträge zur Erklärung der Aśoka-Inscriften*, pp. 13 & ff). V. A. Smith holds that Satyaputra may be either the Tuluva country or the region round about Satyamaṅgalam (EHI., 163, 185 n., 459; *Aśoka*, p. 161). Mr. S. V. Venkateswara takes it to be "the name of the country or people having Kāñchīpuram for its capital" (JRAS., 1918, pp. 541-2; I. A., 1919, p. 24). According to S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, Sātiyaputra refers to the region north of Cochin, where the Matriarchate or Aḷiyasantānam Law prevails (*Beginnings of South Indian History*, p. 73; JRAS., 1919, pp. 581 & ff.) For another view, see *Above*, pp. 41-3.

Taṁbapaṁṇi had for long been taken to stand for Ceylon. But recently E. Hultzsch (Smith, IA., 1918, pp. 48 & ff.) has proposed to identify it with the river Tāmraparṇi, which flows through the modern Tinnevelly District, the old Pāṇḍya kingdom. But if Taṁbapaṁṇi really denotes the river in this Edict, we should have found her mentioned, not after Keralaputra, but after Pāṇḍya, as the river formed its extremity as of India. Similarly, there is no propriety in Aśoka speaking in RE. XIII of "the people of the Tāmraparṇi" as separate from the Pāṇḍyas, as the former were already included in the latter. The old identification therefore stands unassailable.

[2] Bühler renders *sāmaṁnta* by 'vassal-kings.' This is the reading of all the versions except that of Girnār, which has *sāmīpam*. This indicates that *sāmanta* must here signify 'neighbouring or bordering,' which is exactly the sense that Childers' *Pāli Dictionary* gives for the word.

[3] Senart takes *chikīchhā* to signify 'remedies,' and Bühler 'a hospital.' It is safer to render it by 'medical treatment.' For the proper understanding of the passage, see *Above*, pp. 184-6.

III.

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods:—When I had been consecrated twelve years, this order was issued (by me):— Everywhere in my dominions the Yuktas,[1] the Rajjukas[2] and the Prādeśikas[3] shall proceed on circuit[4] every five years as well for this purpose (for the instruction of Dhaṁma), as for other business, to wit,—"meritorious is the hearkening to mother and father; meritorious is liberality to friends, acquaintances and relatives,

to Brāhmaṇs and Śramaṇas [5]; meritorious is the abstention from slaughter of animals; meritorious is small expense and small accumulation." [6] The council (of ministers) shall order the Yuktas in regard to the reckoning (of this expense and accumulation) [7] both according to the letter and according to the spirit.

Notes.

[1] Yuta has been separated by Senart from Rājūka and Prādeśika, and taken in the sense of 'the faithful.' Bühler, however, takes it as an adjective of Rājūka and translates it by 'loyal.' As was first pointed out by Senart (IA., 1891, 246, n. 50), the insertion of the word *cha* thrice in the Girnār text makes Bühler's rendering of Yuta untenable. That word clearly must be taken as a substantive, and, like Rājūkas and Prādeśikas, Yutas must be taken to be officers. For the correct sense of Yuta (Yukta) see *Above*, pp. 53-4. See also *Jāt.*, Vol. V, p. 117, v. 20.

[2] For Rājūkas, see *Above*, pp. 55-6. Jayaswal, however, derives *rājūka* from *rājan*, and takes Rājūkas to denote "the rulers or Ruler-ministers, the Committee of the Parisā vested with real executive powers over the whole empire" (JBORS., 1918, p. 42).

[3] According to Kern, Prādeśika was a local governor, and Senart seems to agree with him. Bühler renders the word by 'vassals' and understands by them the ancestors of the Ṭhākurs, Raos, Rāwals, etc., of the present day. As Prādeśikas have been associated with Yuktas and Rajjukas, they must denote Aśoka's officers, and not his vassals. This agrees with the fact that they had to go on their circuit like the other officers, and during tours to do the work of preaching over and above their office duties. The explanation proposed by F. W. Thomas is therefore the best going at present (JRAS., 1914, pp. 383-6; 1915, p. 112). See also *Above*, pp. 54-5.

[4] Kern and, after him Bühler, translate *anusaṁyānam* by 'on tour of inspection.' This seems to be correct, and

Bühler has quoted authority in support of it from Brahmanical literature with the help of the St. Petersburg Dictionary. Authority of the Pāli texts for this sense is also not wanting. See *e. g. Maj-Nikāya*, Vol. III, p. 8. l. 19; p. 174, ll. 5 and 17. Senart, however, understands it in the sense of "assembly." But this seems to be improbable first because there is no authority in favour of this meaning. Secondly, the object of the verb *nish-kram* which occurs in most of the versions must denote something physical. We might thus speak of *anusaṁyānaṁ niyaṁtu*, but not *anusaṁyānaṁ nikhamaṁtu*. Of course, we speak of *sabhāṁ nishkrāntaḥ*, but only in the sense of 'went to the assembly house' and not 'went to or joined the assembly'. Thirdly, the word *anusaṁyāna* occurs in the separate Jaugaḍa Edict, but not in its Dhauli version. If its meaning is 'assembly' as Senart takes it, the omission of such an important word in any version is inexplicable, but if it simply signifies 'a tour or a tour of inspection,' the same sense is brought out by the causal form of the root *nish-kram*, the use of the word *anusaṁyāna* being not absolutely necessary. The same word has also been traced in a seal found at Basarh, whose legend I read as *Vesāla anusaṁyāna kaṭak-āre* (from the touring camp of the Vesāli (officers) (ASI. AR., 1913-14, pp. 111 and ff. and plate L). Jayaswal takes *anusaṁyāna* to mean "going out of office or on official transfer," and quotes an authority from the *Śukranīti*, not, however, in support of this meaning of the word, but of the desirability of transferring officers (JBOR.S, 1908, pp. 36-40).

5 This is a Dvandva compound signifying "recluses and mendicants of the Brāhmaṇ and Śramaṇa sects." See *Above*, pp. 168-9.

6 *Apavyayatā apabhāṁḍatā sādhu* has been rendered by Senart thus: "good to shun prodigality and violence of language." Bühler omits *apavyayatā*. *Apabhaṁḍatā sādhu*, according to him, means "meritorious is the abstention from reviling heterodox *men*." Both these scholars find, in *apa*, the first component of the two words, the privative use of the preposition *apa*. I agree with Thomas in taking it as equivalent to *alpa* for the reasons specified by him (IA., 1908, p. 20). *Bhāṇḍa*, if we derive it from *bhaṇḍ*, 'to reprove, deride,' can no doubt mean 'reviling' or 'violence of language,' as understood by Bühler and Senart;

but as *apabhāṁḍatā* has been placed in juxtaposition with *apavyayatā*, *bhāṇḍa* must be so interpreted as to show that *bahu-bhāṇḍatā* is one extreme just as *bahu-vyayatā* is another. This is possible only by taking *bhāṇḍa* in the sense of "goods, property." *Apabhāṇḍatā* thus means 'little accumulation' in contradistinction with *apavyayatā*, 'little expense.'

[7] This is one of the most knotty passages from Aśoka inscriptions. Senart's interpretation: '"It is for the clergy further to instruct the faithful in detail as to principles and in the terms." This may be expressed with a slight paraphrase thus:—"To the clergy (it falls) then to teach in detail the basis (*of morality, its various rules*), and the form (*i.e.* according to the formulæ and in the appointed order)."' According to Bühler the passage means: "Moreover, the *teachers and ascetics of all* schools will inculcate *what is* befitting at divine service both according to the letter and according to the spirit." Now, let us try to arrive at the correct sense of the passage. In the first place, what is the meaning of the word Yuta here? Obviously it must denote the same thing which the word denotes above in this inscription. We have seen that as Yutas are mentioned in conjunction with Rajjukas and Prādeśikas who were officers, they must denote a class of officers; and we have also seen what class of officers they were. This disposes of the meaning 'the faithful' and 'what is befitting' which Senart and Bühler attach to the word. Secondly, what is the meaning of the word *parisā*, which is taken in the sense of "Clergy" (*saṁgha*) by Senart and "teachers and ascetics of schools" by Bühler. It is worthy of note that *parisā* occurs also in Rock Edict VI., where, as we shall see further on, Jayaswal has conclusively shown us that it means 'the council of ministers.' This fits here excellently, because it is the council of ministers that can with propriety issue orders to the Yuktas. Now remains the word *gaṇanā* which signifies, 'reckoning, counting.' We have seen that Aśoka asks his officers to preach the development of the virtues of *alpa-vyayatā* and *alpa-bhāṇḍatā*. But how was it to be determined that his people were developing these homely virtues? It was, therefore, necessary that some of his officers should make a house to house inspection and count how much of expense and

how much of goods each householder had incurred or accumulated. But it was impossible to lay down one inflexible rule for all households. So the Parishad was ordered to advise them as each difficulty arose (*Above*, p. 60).

IV.

Translation.

A long period, many hundreds of years, have elapsed, (during which) the slaughter of animate beings, injury to creatures, unseemly behaviour to relatives, (and) unseemly behaviour to Brāhmaṇs and Śramaṇas only increased. But now, in consequence of the practice of Dhaṁma by king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, the sound of drum has become the sound of Dhaṁma after (his) having shown to people spectacles of aerial chariots, spectacles of elephants, masses of fire and other divine representations.[1] As has not happened for many hundred years before, have now increased, through king-Priyadarśin-Beloved-of-gods' instructions in Dhaṁma, abstention from the slaughter of animate beings, abstention from injury to creatures, seemly behaviour to relatives, seemly behaviour to Brāhmaṇs and Śramaṇas, hearkening to father and mother, hearkening to the elders. The practice of Dhaṁma of this and other manifold kinds has grown, and king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the

gods, will (still more) cause this practice of Dhaṁma to grow. The sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of king Priyadarśin will cause the practice of Dhaṁma to grow until the æon of destruction,[2] (and), abiding in Dhaṁma and virtuous conduct, will give instruction in Dhaṁma; for the most excellent act is instruction in Dhaṁma, and (the fostering of) the practice of Dhaṁma is not for a man devoid of virtuous conduct. Growth and non-diminution in this matter are therefore excellent. For this purpose, namely, that (my descendants) may enjoin the growth of this matter and that no diminution should be noticeable, has this (Dhaṁma-lipi) been caused to be written. This was caused to be written by king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, when he was consecrated twelve years.

Notes.

[1] This passage has been variously interpreted, but these interpretations may be divided into two classes according as they are taken to refer to terrestrial objects or atmospheric phenomena. The first kind of interpretation has been favoured by Senart and Bühler, and the second by Kern and for some time by Hultzsch (JRAS., 1911, 785 & ff.). I confess, the first interpretation commends itself to me as being more natural. But the actual sense I deduce from the passage differs from that of Senart and Bühler, and has been set forth in IA., 1913, 25 & ff, and it is a matter of extreme gratification that Hultzsch has accepted my view (*ibid*, 1913, 651 & ff).

The following are the different translations proposed: Kern:—"But now, when king Devānāmpriya Priyadarśin practises righteousness, his kettle-drum has become a

summons to righteousness, while apparitions of chariots of the gods, and apparitions of celestial elephants, and fiery balls, and other signs in the heavens, showed themselves to the people." (IA., V, 261.)

Senart :—" But now king Piyadasi, dear to the gods, being faithful in the practice of religion, has made the noise of drums to resound (*in such a way that it is*) as the (*very*) sound of religion, pointing out to the people the processions of reliquaries, elephants, torches and other heavenly spectacles." (*Ibid*, X. 84.)

Bühler :—" But now, in consequence of the fulfilment of the sacred law by king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, the sound of drums, or rather the sound of the law, *has been heard*, while the sight of cars of the gods, elephants, and other heavenly spectacles were exhibited to the people." (EI., II. 467.)

The passage in question has recently been discussed by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar after my interpretation was published (JRAS., 1915, p. 521; IA., 1915, p. 203). He renders it as follows: " But now, in consequence of the adoption of the Dharma (law of morality) by Devānāmpriya Priyadarśin, the sound of the drum is lo! but the sound of the Dharma; the spectacle presented to the people, processional cars, elephants, bonfires and others, the representations of the *Devas*." I am afraid, the translation is not quite admissible. Because the word *aññāni* clearly shows that the *vimānas*, *hastins* and *agnis-kandhas* which Aśoka showed to his people were *divyāni rūpāni*. They could not therefore be the processional cars, elephants and bonfires, which are earthly objects. F. W. Thomas also gives 'bon-fire' as the meaning of *aggikhaṁdha* (JRAS., 1914, 395), but has not shown how the display of bonfire can create and develop righteousness among the people.

For the elucidation of this passage, see *Above*, pp. 124-6 and 136-8. In my note referred to above (IA., 1913, p. 25 & 11), the word *vimāna* alone has been satisfactorily explained. For this purpose attention was drawn to a Pāli work called *Vimāna-vatthu*. The same work also explains the words *hastin*, and *agi* or *joti-khandha*. From it we learn that of those who live pious lives, some obtain in the next world not only *vimānas* or heavenly palaces, but also *hastins* or all-white celestial elephants (p. 4, l. 1;

p. 56, ll. 16 & 35) and *agi* or *joti-khandhas*, that is, a complexion resplendent like lightning (p. i, l. 9), stars (p. 7, l.28), or fire (p. 12, l.33). *Aññāni cha divyāni rūpāni* include such vehicles as celestial horses, ships, and so forth mentioned in the same work, that is the *Vimāna-vatthu* (p. 12, l. 28; p. 4, l. 26).

[2] For *Saṁvata-kapa* (=*Saṁvarta-kalpa*), see JRAS., 1911, p. 485, n. 1.

V.

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: Good is difficult to perform. He who initiates good does something difficult to perform. Now by me much good has been done. If my sons, grandsons, and my descendants after them, until the æon of destruction, follow similarly, they will do what is meritorious, but in this respect he, who abandons even part (of his duty), will do ill. Verily, sin is easy to commit.[1]

Now, for a long time past previously, there were no Dharma-Mahāmātras.[2] Dharma-Mahāmātras were created by me when I had been consecrated thirteen years. They have been set to work among all sects for the establishment of Dhaṁma, promotion of Dhaṁma, and for the welfare and happiness of the righteous.[3] In the country of the Yavanas, Kaṁbojas and the Gandhāras,[4] and of the hereditary Rāshṭrikas and others on the Western Coast, they are

occupied with the welfare and happiness, of the Brāhmaṇs and Gṛihapatis who have become hirelings,[5] and, of the helpless and the aged, and (are also occupied) with the removal of shackles[6] from the righteous. They concern themselves with a (money) grant, the removal of shackles,[7] or the release, of (any man) who is bound with fetters, according as he is encumbered with progeny, is subjected to oppression, or is aged.[8] They are everywhere employed in (my) closed female apartments, or among my brothers, sisters, and other relatives, whether in Pāṭaliputra or outlying towns. Everywhere in my dominions they are occupied with the righteous, if he is leaning on Dhaṁma, is an abode of Dhaṁma, or is given up to alms-giving. For this purpose this document of Dhaṁma has been engraved, namely, that it may long endure and that my progeny may follow (me).

Notes.

[1] It has been customary to separate the initial portion of this inscription from the place where mention is made of the creation of the Dharma-Mahāmātras, as if both these parts were disconnected. But such a procedure is unwarranted. Every inscription of Aśoka is permeated by a certain idea which connects its different parts. The initial portion must therefore be so translated as to show that it is connected with what follows. Accordingly, *kalāṇa* or *kayāna* does not mean 'a good work', or 'a good deed', but rather 'good' or 'weal', both temporal and spiritual. Aśoka tells us that he has done much good of this nature, and exhorts his sons, grandsons, and descendants to follow in his path. He insists upon their

performing this duty in full and not partially, because *pāpa* or sin, that is, temporal or spiritual evil, comes naturally to a human being. Hence the latter, especially if he is a ruler, can never be too much on his guard, and ought to fulfil his whole duty to his subjects, without omitting any part thereof. In the Mānserā, Kālsī and Dhaulī copies we have *pāpe hi nāma supadālaye*, which, I think, means "sin requires to be well weeded out". Aśoka then informs us that contributory to his plan of doing *kalyāṇa* or temporal and spiritual good to his subjects was his appointment of the Dharma-Mahāmātras, who, as we shall soon see, were set to bring about both these kinds of weal to the people. For his contrast of *kalyāṇa* with *pāpa*, see Pillar Edict III.

[2] The term *Dharma-Mahāmātra* has been translated 'Overseer of the Sacred Law' by Bühler (EI., II. 167) and 'Censor of the Law of Piety' by Smith (*Asoka*, p. 168). It had better be left untranslated, as any translation of it must be misleading. There were many Mahāmātras before Aśoka's time, but he was the first to create Dharma-Mahāmātras, that is, Mahāmātras for the promotion of Dhaṁma.

[3] The construction of this passage has rather become abstruse by the indiscriminate use of the conjunction *cha* in the various recensions, particularly after *dhaṁmayutasa* in the Girnār copy. Nevertheless, I think, that what is here intended is that the Dharma-Mahāmātras were to concern themselves with all the Pāsaṁḍas and Dharmayuktas in Aśoka's dominions. For *Pāsaṁḍa*, see *Above*, p. 172. The word *Dhaṁma-yuta* occurs thrice in this inscription, and each time Bühler interprets it differently. Senart's criticism seems to be unanswerable (IA., 1891, p. 239, n. 30), and he proposes to render it by 'the faithful of the (true) religion'. It, however, seems better to translate it by 'one full of Dhaṁma, the righteous'. Thomas takes it in the sense of "the officials of the *dharma* (or ecclesiastical) department" (JRAS., 1915, pp. 102-3), and Smith "Subordinates of the Law of Piety" (*Asoka*, p. 170). They thus take the word to be Dharma-Yukta, and not *dharmayukta*. But this procedure is open to objection. In the first place, Aśoka nowhere tells us about the creation of the Dharma-Yuktas, which he certainly would have done, if he had created them, as he no doubt

does in the case of the Dharma-Mahāmātras. And we are not warranted in supposing that there already existed before the time of Aśoka any officials of that description. Secondly, it is inconceivable why the Dharma-Mahāmātras have to show solicitude for the welfare and happiness of and even preach to the Dharma-Yuktas, if the *dhaṁma-yutas* were the king's officials, and not his subjects. Thirdly, in PE., VII. Rajjukas are spoken of as preaching to the *Dhaṁma-yuta jana*, who can there stand only for those people who follow Aśoka's Dhaṁma.

The duties of a Dharma-Mahāmātra, it will be seen, were of a twofold nature, according as they pertained to the material or the spiritual welfare of the people. See *Above*, pp. 65 and ff.; also pp. 144 and ff.

[4] Bühler proposes a punctuation after *apalaṁtā* and connects *Yona-Kaṁboja-Gaṁdhālānaṁ* with what precedes. But I agree with Senart in taking the latter along with what follows. The reasons for this procedure have been ably set forth in IA. 1891, p. 240, n. 30. For the identification of the Yonas, Kambojas, Gandhāras and so forth, see *Above*, pp. 29 and *ff*.

[5] *Bramaṇibha* and its variants correspond exactly, as was pointed out by Bühler (VOJ. XII, 76), to the literary Pāli *brahmanibbha* (brāhmaṇ-ebhya) which occurs in no less than three verses in the Mahānāradakassapa Jātaka. The term *ibbha* of this compound has been explained as *gahapati* in the commentary. For the social group exactly denoted by it, see *Above* p. 183. The phrase *bhatamaya* (G), *bhaṭamaya* (S. M. & K.), or *bhaṭimaya* (D.) has very much exercised the epigraphists, and has been variously explained; 'soldiers and warriors' = *bhaṭa-marya* (Senart); 'hired servants' = *bhṛita-maya* (Bühler); and 'servants and masters' = *bhaṭa-m-ayesu* (Franke). I can agree with Bühler only. *Bhaṭa* cannot possibly stand here for 'warriors'. This is forbidden by the variant form *bhata* furnished by Girnār. *Maya*, again, cannot be equivalent to *marya* as its *r* would have then been preserved in the Shāhbāzgarhī and Mānserā versions. It is therefore natural to equate the phrase with the Sanskrit *bhṛita-maya*. I, however, take this expression as qualifying *bramaṇibha*, and translate the whole by 'Brāhmaṇs and Gṛihapatis, consisting of hirelings'. Not all individuals of the Brāhman and Vaiśya classes are meant here, but rather

those who were in the same condition as *anātha* and *vṛiddha*, 'the helpless and the old'. We need not doubt that some of the Brāhmans and Vaisyas were in this degraded condition. Rhys Davids says: "Brahmins are also frequently mentioned as engaged in agriculture, and as hiring themselves out as cowherds and even goat-herds" (*Buddhist India*, p. 57). For Gṛihapatis reduced to such a condition, see Fick's *Social Organisation*, etc., Trans., pp. 255-6.

[6] In Separate Kaliṅga Edict I., Aśoka warns a certain class of his officials against any *bandhana* or *parikleśa* (p. 84, l. 1) befalling any one of his subjects. At the end of the same Edict, while repeating this warning, he uses the words *paribodha* and *parikleśa* (p. 86, l. 7). *Paribodha* is thus practically the same as *bandhana*, and may be translated by 'bonds or shackles'. The same meaning suits the word very well in the passages quoted by Thomas in JRAS., 1915, pp. 99-106. As regards the other reading, *parigodha*, presented by Girnār, he seems to be right in ascribing this confusion between the two words to the usage of the time.

[7] In regard to the interpretation of this passage I agree, on the whole, with Senart. Bühler takes *badha* in *bandhana-badhasa* to mean 'corporal punishment'. The word is *badha* in all recensions, and not *vadha*. And the rule *vabayor=abhedaḥ* was certainly not applicable to the Aśokan records. The phrase is equivalent to the Sanskrit *bandhana-baddhasya*, and means "of one bound with fetters" that is, 'imprisoned'. *Patividhāna* has been used in Rock Edict VIII in the sense of 'distribution or grant (of money),' and suits here very well. The word *abhikara* has been traced by Bühler to the root *abhi* + *kṛī*, and he refers us to *Jat.* IV. 121, v. 72, where the word *abhikirati* means 'overpowers, oppresses'. For a different interpretation, see JBORS., 1918, pp. 144-6.

[8] I have nowhere seen a translation of this passage where its parts are intelligently connected one with the other. For an elucidation of the exact kind of work which in the passage the Dharma-Mahāmātras are expected to do, see *Above*, pp. 66-7.

VI.

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods :—A long period has passed (when) formerly there was no dispatch of business and reporting at all hours. This, therefore, I have done, namely, that at all hours and in all places,—whether I am eating or am in the closed (female) apartments, in the inner chamber, in the royal stables,[1] on horseback[2] or in pleasure orchards, the Reporters may report people's business to me. People's business I do at all places. And when in respect of anything that I personally order by word of mouth, for being issued or proclaimed, or, again, (if) in respect of any emergent work that may superimpose itself on the Mahāmātras, there is any division or rejection in the council,[3] I have so commanded that it shall be forthwith communicated to me at all places and at all hours. I am never satisfied with (my) exertions or with (my) dispatch of business. For the welfare of the whole world is an esteemed duty with me. And the root of that, again, is this, namely, exertion[4] and dispatch of business. There is no higher duty than the welfare of the whole world. And what little effort I make,—what is it for?—(in order) that I may be free

from debt to the creatures, that I may render some happy here and that they may gain heaven in the next world. For this purpose have I caused this document of Dhaṁma to be engraved: what for?—in order that it may endure for a long time and that my sons and grandsons may similarly exert themselves for the welfare of the whole world. This, however, is difficult to carry out without the utmost exertion.

Notes.

[1] The exact meaning of *vacha* is not settled. It is translated 'secret retreat' (Senart), 'latrine' (Bühler), and 'closet' (Smith). The latter two evidently take it as equivalent to *varchas* which, however, means 'excreta,' only. Jayaswal (IA., 1918, pp. 53-55) rightly remarks that "no king in his senses would ask officers to announce the business of suitors in his latrine," and says that *vacha* stands for *vraja* and explains the philological difficulty, namely, the change of *j* to *ch*, by referring us to *vrachaṁti* in RE., XIII (Shāhbāzgarhi) standing for *vrajanti*. He also shows that *vraja* is mentioned thrice in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra, where the word is used to denote any 'herd of cattle, whether of horses, or camels, and so forth.' RE. XII. mentions *vacha-bhūmikas*, or Officers in charge of cattle-rearing grounds. See *Above*, p. 57. Jayaswal, however, takes it in a different sense. The only objection to the full acceptance of Jayaswal's proposal is that the philological difficulty is not wholly removed, because the change of *j* to *ch* in the present instance is a peculiarity of the Shāhbāzgarhi and Mansherā edicts only, and hence *vacha* of the Girnār and other recensions cannot reasonably be taken to stand for *vraja*. Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya Sastri also takes *vacha* as equivalent to *vraja*, but takes the latter to mean 'a road' (IA., 1920, p. 56). This in his opinion refers to the king when he is on the road for a short walk.

[2] Bühler takes *vinīta* as *vinītaka* 'a litter or

palanquin.' Jayaswal (IA., 1918, p. 53) takes it as equivalent to Kauṭilya's *vinaya*, and interprets it to mean 'military exercise' and quotes in support of his position a passage from the Arthaśāstra. Reasons against Jayaswal's interpretation have been set forth by Radhagovinda Basak (IA., 1919, pp. 14-15). Basak further shows that the Amarakosha (II. 8. 45) has *vinītāḥ sādhu-vāhinaḥ*, that is, *vinītas* are easy-riding or well-trained horses. This is supported by the Medinī which gives *vinītaḥ suvah-āśve syāt*. From the same word has been derived *vainītaka* which Amarakosha explains as *paramparā-vāhana*. It signifies, I think, any conveyance that is borne by relays of *vinītas* or well-trained horses. In the Majjhima-Nikāya, as pointed out by Vidhushekhara Sastri (IA., 1920, p. 55), Pasenadi, king of Kosala, is referred to along with his seven *ratha-vinītas* when he has to go from Śrāvastī to Sāketa. These *ratha-vinītas* are placed at successive stages, so that the first is disposed off as soon as the next one is reached. What is this *ratha-vinīta*? He takes it to mean 'a *vinīta* in the form of a *ratha*.' Perhaps it is better to take it as denoting 'a horse trained for the chariot.' *Vinīta* can thus be brought to bear the same sense that has been assigned to it in the lexicons.

[3] The most important word here is *parisā* (=*parishat*), taken to signify "the Buddhist clergy" (Senart), and "the committee of any caste or sect" (Bühler). Jayaswal alone seems to be correct in taking it as equivalent to the *mantri-Parishat* mentioned in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra (IA., 1913, 282 and ff.). This is just what might be expected in an administrative edict, such as this Edict undoubtedly is. But for a different meaning of this word and also of this passage, see JASB., 1920, pp. 331 and ff. The next important word is *nijhati*, which occurs also in PE. VII. The verbal root of this word occurs also in PE. IV. and Separate Kalinga Edict I. In the latter it certainly means 'to reflect, consider,' but in the former 'to soften, arrest.' The second sense fits RE. VI. and PE. VII, better. *Nijhati* may be therefore taken here as signifying 'rejection, nullification.' For the full sense of this passage, see *Above*, pp. 59 and ff.

[4] Bühler quotes verses from the *rājadharma* of the Śānti-parvan (Cap. 58, vs. 13-16) of the Mahābhārata,

which are apparently from Bṛihaspati's Arthaśāstra, and where 'exertion' is ordained for all rulers. The same is prescribed in *Kauṭilīya* also (p. 39).

VII.

Translation.

King Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, wishes that all sects may dwell at all places, because they all desire self-restraint and purification of heart. People, however, are of various likings and various attachments. They will perform either the whole or a part (of their duty). But he is certainly a low man who has no self-restraint, purity of heart (gratitude, and steadfast devotion), though he may have lavish liberality.[1]

Notes.

[1] The last clause of this Edict is rather difficult to interpret. It depends upon correctly understanding the meaning and force of the word *nichā* or *niche*. Bühler translates it as follows: "But self-control, purity of mind, gratitude and firm attachment are laudable in a lowly man, to whom even great liberality is impossible." But this is untenable, because in the first place *nichā* does not mean 'a lowly,' but 'a low person.' Secondly, *nichā* of G. cannot possibly stand for *nichāya*. Thirdly, *bāḍhaṁ* here is an adverb and not an adjective, and can never mean 'laudable.' Smith, following F. W. Thomas, translates: "Even for a person to whom lavish liberality is impossible, the virtues of mastery over the senses, purity of mind, gratitude, and

steadfastness are altogether indispensable." Thomas thus takes *niche-nityaṁ*, that is, 'permanent,' 'indispensable,' in contradistinction to *naimittikaṁ*, 'occasional'. If *niche* here had really been equivalent to *nityaṁ*, we should have had *nitiaṁ* at least in K., D. and J. Besides, if this word had been used as an adjective, we should have expected *nichā* in all recensions so as to agree with the preceding word *diḍha-bhatitā*. The fact that in G. we have *nichā* and in other copies *niche* clearly shows that it is in the nominative case, the first being plural and the second singular. The plural *nichā* standing in relation to the singular *yasa* in G. need not trouble us, because this confusion is not unknown to the Aśoka inscriptions: compare, for instance, the following passage from RE. V. (G.): *ta mama putā cha potrā cha paraṁ cha tena ye mama apachaṁ āva saṁvaṭakapā anuvatisare tathā so sukataṁ kāsati*, where the plural *anuvatisare* has the same subject as the singular *kāsati*. What Aśoka means is that *saṁyama* and *bhāvasudhi* are virtues of such paramount excellence that every individual ought to develop them in himself. These virtues, again, are inculcated by every sect along with other commandments. Whether they will all be practised by any member of a sect is doubtful. But it is supremely imperative on him to cultivate at least these two virtues, the negation of which can never be compensated by any degree of liberality he may show. This edict looks like a replica of RE. XII., where Aśoka distinctly says that he does not think of *dāna* and *pujā* so highly as of restraint of speech *vacha-guti*, and willingness to learn the tenets of other sects. In the present edict also Aśoka does not attach so much importance to *dāna* as to *saṁyama* which doubtless corresponds to *vacha-guti* and also to *bhāva-sudhi* which can signify 'purification of heart' so as to exclude any bad feeling towards other sects.

VIII.

Translation.

A (long) period has elapsed during which kings used to go out on tours of pleasure.[1] Here

there were chase and other similar diversions. Now, king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, repaired to Saṁbodhi (Bodhi Tree),[2] when he had been consecrated ten years. Thus (originated) this touring for Dhaṁma. Here this happens, namely, visits and gifts to the Brāhmaṇ and Śramaṇa ascetics, visits and largesses of gold to the aged, and visits, instructions in Dhaṁma and enquiries about Dhaṁma, of the provincials. Since then king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, has been enjoying great delight of this (nature) in another sphere.[3]

Notes.

[1] A *vihāra-yātrā* has been described in the M. Bh., *Above*, pp. 17 & ff.

[2] The most difficult expression to understand here is *ayāya saṁbodhiṁ*. For the various readings of this passage and also my interpretation, see IA., 1913, pp. 159 & ff.

[3] *Tadopayā* has been taken to stand for *tadauparyāt*, meaning 'since then.' Should we not have expected *tadopariyā* in Dhauli and Jaugaḍā copies at least? *Bhāge aṁne* is taken by Bühler to mean "in exchange *for past pleasures.*"

IX.

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: People perform various (lucky) rites in sicknesses, at marriages,[1] on the birth of sons, and on journey. On these and other similar

occasions people perform various rites. In this matter, however, womankind performs much manifold, (but) trivial, useless rite. Rites should undoubtedly be performed. But a rite of this kind bears little fruit. That rite, however, bears great fruit, which is Dhaṁma-maṅgala.[2] There seemly behaviour towards the servile and menial classes (and) reverence towards preceptors (is considered) meritorious, self-control in regard to animals (is considered) meritorious. These and other similar (items) are indeed the Dhaṁma-maṅgala. Therefore, a father, a son, a brother, a master, (a friend or acquaintance, nay, even a neighbour) ought to say: "this is meritorious, this rite ought to be performed till that object is attained. And after it is performed, I shall do it again."[3]

(G., D., & J. Texts.)

And it has been said: "gift is a meritorious thing." But there is no gift or favour comparable to the gift or favour of Dhaṁma. Therefore, a friend, a sympathiser, a relative, or a companion ought to exhort (one another) in various things, saying: "this is a duty, this is meritorious; with this it is possible to attain heaven." And what thing is more worthy of achievement through this than the attainment of heaven?

(K. S. & M. Texts.)

For every worldly rite is of a dubious nature. Perchance it may accomplish that object, and

perchance it may not remain in this world. But this Dhaṁma-maṅgala is not conditioned by time. Even though it does not achieve that object here, it begets endless merit in the next world. But if it achieves that object, both are here gained, to wit, that object of this world and the begetting of endless merit in the next through that Dhaṁma-maṅgala.

Notes.

[1] For the phrase *āvāha-vivāha*, see *Dīgha-N.*, I. 99.

[2] For the explanation of the different parts of this edict, see *Above*, pp. 116, 177 and 182.

[3] This is found only in K., S., & M. (JRAS., 1913, pp. 654 & f.

X.

Translation.

King Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, does not deem glory or fame as conducing to any great thing except in that, whether at the present time or in future,[1] his people may show desire to hearken to Dhaṁma and practise the utterances of Dhaṁma. In this matter only does king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, desire glory or fame. Whatever exertions king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, puts forth are (all) with reference to the other world,—why is it?—in order that every one may have as little *parisrava*[2] as possible. But that is *parisrava*

which is *apuṇya* (unrighteousness).[3] This, however, is difficult to accomplish whether by the lower or the higher class (of officials),[4] except by the utmost exertion[5] and by renouncing everything. But it is most difficult for the higher (class).

Notes.

1 *Tadātva* = the time being, present time, *āyati* = future time, the future; *dīghāya* = for a long time.

2 Compare *apa-parisrava* with *ap-āsinava* of PE. II.

3 *Apuṇya* may be either *pāpa* or *āsinava* of PE. III.

4 G. alone has *jana* here, the other recensions giving *vaga* instead. About the beginning of this edict, however, we have *jano* in all recensions. This clearly shows that the word *jano* in G. at the second place down below has a different sense, namely, that denoted by the other word, *vaga*, that is "a body of men," that is, I believe, "a class of officials."

5 I have already said that the Arthaśāstra recommends *parākrama* or exertion to kings and officials. And it is worthy of note that Aśoka also speaks of the necessity of *parākrama* in for himself or his sons and grandsons as in RE. VI, or for his officials as in the present edict.. These two edicts may therefore be compared to Minor Rock Edict I.

XI.

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: There is no such gift as the gift of Dhaṁma, to wit, acquaintance with Dhaṁma, participation in Dhaṁma, and kinship with Dhaṁma

Therein this happens "seemly bahaviour towards slaves and servants, meritorious hearkening to father and mother, meritorious gifts to friends, acquaintances, and relatives, and to Brāhmaṇs and Sramaṇas (and) meritorious non-slaughter of animals." This ought to be said by a father, a son, a brother, a master, a friend or acquaintance, nay, even a neighbour: "This is meritorious; this ought to be done." He, who does it in this manner, accomplishes the worldly life and obtains infinite spiritual merit through that gift of Dhaṁma.

XII.

Translation.

King Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, honours men of all sects, ascetics and householders, with gift and manifold honour. But the Beloved of gods does not think so much of gift and honour as—what?—as that there should be a growth of the essential among (men of) all sects. The growth of the essential, however, is of various kinds.[1] But the root of it is restraint of speech,[2]—how?—namely, there ought not to be any honour to one's own sect or condemnation of another's sect without any occasion, or any depreciation (of the latter) on this and that occasion. On the contrary, others' sects should be honoured on this and that

occasion. By so doing one exalts one's own sect, and does service to another's sect. By doing otherwise one injures one's own sect and also harms another sect. For one who does honour to one's own sect and condemns another's sect, all through attachment to one's own sect,—why?—in order that one may render one's own sect effulgent, in reality by so doing injures severely one's own sect. Concourse [3] is therefore commendable,—why?—in order that they may hear and desire to hear (further) one another's Dhaṁma. For this is the desire of the Beloved of the gods,—What?—that all sects shall be well-informed and conducive of good. And those who are favourably disposed towards this or that sect should be informed: "The Beloved of the gods does not so much think of gift or honour as—what?—as that there may be a growth of the essential among all sects and also mutual appreciation." For this end are engaged the Dharma-Mahāmātras, Superintendents of women, the Vrajabhūmikas [4] and other bodies (of officials). And this is its fruit—the exaltation of one's own sect and the illumination of Dhaṁma.

Notes.

[1] For properly understanding this edict, see *Above* p. 109 and ff.

[2] For the words *vachoguti* and *bhatitā*, compare RE. VII.

[3] Samavāya is derived from the root *samav-e*, which means "to come together, assemble." What Aśoka means is that if the adherents of the different sects come in contact with one another, they would learn many good points of religions other than their own.

[4] For the elucidation of the function of these officials, see *Above*, pp. 56 and ff.

XIII.

Translation.

(The country of) Kaliṅga was conquered when king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, had been anointed eight years. One hundred and fifty thousand were therefrom captured, one hundred thousand were there slain, and many times as many died. Thereafter, now,[1] in that acquired (country) of Kaliṅga are found Beloved of the gods' zealous protection of Dhaṁma, longing for Dhaṁma, and teaching of Dhaṁma. That is the remorse of the Beloved of the gods on having conquered Kaliṅga. Verily the slaughter, death and captivity of the people, that occurs when an unconquered (country) is being conquered, is looked upon as extremely painful and regrettable by the Beloved of the gods. But this is to be looked upon as more regrettable than that, namely, that there dwell Brāhmaṇic, Sramaṇic, and other sects and householders, among whom are established

this hearkening to the elders, hearkening to the parents, hearkening to the preceptors, seemly behaviour and steadfast devotion to friends, acquaintances, companions and relatives, and to slaves and servants. There (in the war) to such (pious) people befall personal violence, death, or banishment from the loved ones. And in case they are settled in life [2] and possess undiminished affection, their friends, acquaintances, companions and relatives (thereby) meet with a calamity, (and) there that (calamity) becomes their personal violence. This is the lot of all men and is considered regrettable by the Beloved of the gods. And there is no country except that of the Yavanas [3] where there are not these congregations, namely, the Brāhmaṇs, and the Sramaṇas, and there is no place in any country where men have no faith in one sect or another. Even one-hundredth or one-thousandth part of those who were slain, died, or were captured in Kaliṅga, is to-day [4] considered regrettable by the Beloved of the gods. Nay if any one does (him) wrong, the Beloved of the gods must bear all that can be borne. And to (the people of) the forests [5] which are in the dominions of the Beloved of the gods he shows conciliatoryness and seeks their cessation (from evil ways). The Beloved of the gods is mighty though repentant. Unto them (therefore) it is said, —what?—"they should express sense of shame, and they shall not be killed." The Beloved of

the gods desires for all beings non-injury, self-control, impartiality and gentleness.

But this conquest is considered to be the chiefest by the Beloved of the gods, which is conquest through Dhaṁma. And that again has been achieved by the Beloved of the gods here and in the bordering dominions, even as far as six hundred *yojanas*, where dwells the Yavana king called Aṁtiyoka, and beyond this Aṁtiyoka to where (dwell) the four kings called Turamāya, Aṁtekina, Maga and Alikasu(ṁ)dara,[6]—(likewise) down below, where are the Cholas, the Pāṇḍyas, as far as the Tāmraparṇiyas,—likewise here in the king's dominions among the Yavanas and Kaṁbojas, the Nābhapaṁtis in Ṅābhaka, the hereditary Bhojas, Andhras and Pulindas,—everywhere they follow the teaching of the Beloved of the gods in respect of Dhaṁma. Even where the envoys of the Beloved of the gods do not go, they, hearing the ordinances uttered according to Dhaṁma and the teaching of Dhaṁma by the Beloved of the gods, practise Dhaṁma and will so practise. And the conquest which is thereby achieved is everywhere a conquest flavoured with love. That love is attained in the conquest through Dhaṁma. A petty thing, however, is that love. The Beloved of the gods esteems, as bearing great fruit, only that which concerns the next world. And this edict of Dhaṁma has been recorded for this purpose,—

why ?—in order that my sons and grandsons, whoever they may be, may not think of a new conquest as worth achieving, that in regard to a conquest, possible only through (the use) of arrow,[7] they may observe forbearance and lightness of punishment, and that they may regard that to be the (real) conquest which is a conquest through Dhaṁma. That is (good) for this world and the next. May all (their) strong attachment be attachment to exertion. That is (good) for this world and the next.

Notes.

1 *Adhunā* (now) and *aja* (to-day) referred to in note 4 below clearly show that Aśoka's zealous protection of Dhaṁma in Kaliṅga pertains to the time when the edict was promulgated.

2 *Saṁvidhā* signifies 'mode of life,' 'means of leading life' (*Raghuvaṁśa*, I. 94) *Saṁvihita* may therefore be taken to denote 'those who are fixed to any mode of life.'

3 The *yona* denotes the Yavana people, and consequently the province inhabited by them must be distinguished from the dominions of the Yavana-rājas referred to further in this edict. The Yona province was included in Aśoka's empire, as may also be seen from RE. V.

4 The word *aja* strengthens the conclusion in note 1.

5 For the identification of this province, see *Above*, pp. 43-4.

6 For these and the following names, see *Above*, pp. 29 and ff. For another interpretation of *a-shashu*, see IA., 1918, p. 297.

7 *Sarasake*=*śara-śakyaḥ* (=possible through arrows). *Shayakashi*=*śaly-ākarshi*, which has practically the same sense. What Aśoka probably means is that if a rebellion breaks out and has to be put down with the

might of arms, his successors should in such cases exercise as much forbearance and inflict as light punishment as possible, so as to make this terrestrial *vijaya* well-nigh bloodless.

XIV.

Translation.

These *Dhamma-lipis* have been caused to be inscribed by king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, either as abridged, of medium length, or expanded. Not everything has been brought together at every place. Vast, indeed, is the kingdom; and much has been inscribed, and much will I cause to be inscribed. And, owing to their sweetness, various things have been uttered over and over again. And why? In order that the people may act accordingly. But it may be that something has here been inscribed incompletely, considering either the (unfamiliar) country or (good) reason for condensation, or through the fault of the scribe.[1]

Notes.

[1] The last sentence has been variously interpreted. "But it may be that something has been written here incompletely, be it on account of the space, be it on account of some reason to be *especially* determined, or through a mistake of the writer"—Bühler. "It may be that something may have been written incompletely, by reason of a mutilation of a passage, or of misunderstanding, or by a blunder of the writer"—Smith.

(*b*) PILLAR EDICTS

I

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: "When I had been crowned twenty-six years, this *Dhaṁmalipi* was caused to be written. Things of this and the next world are difficult to promote,[1] except through intense love of Dhaṁma, rigorous scrutiny,[2] extreme obedience, utmost fear, (and) extreme energy. But through my instructions, this longing for Dhaṁma and love of Dhaṁma have grown and will grow day by day[3] (among my people). And my officials, whether of high, low,[4] or middle rank, themselves conform (to these), and, being fit to induce the fickle-minded to undertake the fulfilment (of Dhaṁma), cause (the latter also) to attain to them.[5] So also the Mahāmātras of the Frontier Provinces. This is the rule: namely, protection by Dhaṁma, execution (of order) by Dhaṁma, causing happiness by Dhaṁma, and administration by Dhaṁma."

Notes.

[1] *Saṁpaṭipādaye* = *saṁpratipādyaṁ*. The same word occurs in line 8 below, as *saṁpaṭipādayaṁti*. *Du-saṁpaṭipādaye* = 'Difficult to gain' (Bühler), 'difficult to secure'

(Smith). *Saṁpatipādayaṁti*='carry out (my orders)' (Bühler), 'lead others in the way' (Smith). It is clear that both these scholars are taking the same word in two senses at two different places in one and the same edict. Besides, they take it once as referring to Aśoka's subjects in general and at another time as referring to his officials. The word should, however, be so interpreted as to have the same sense in both the places. The concluding portion of the inscription, again, clearly shows that Aśoka is here addressing himself not to the people in general but to his officers of all ranks. *Saṁpaṭipad* must therefore be taken to mean "cause (people) to attain to," of course, things of this and the next world.

According to Senart, *du-saṁpaṭipādaye*='difficult to provide,' and *saṁpaṭipādayaṁti*='direct (the people) in the Good Way.' He has no doubt taken the word in both places in the causal sense and as referring to officials, but not, however, in the same sense.

[2] *Palīkhā*='scrutiny,' that is, as to whether one's actions are lawful or not. *Susūsā* and *bhaya* are, of course, with reference to king Priyadarśin. As regards *usāha* compare RE.VI. & D.—J.SI., I. Of course, all these qualities are to be exhibited by the king's officials.

[3] *Suve suve*='every day,' 'from day to day' (*cf.* Dhaṁmapada, V. 229)—Senart.

[4] *Gevayā* "is derived from the Sanskrit root *gep* or *glep* which the *Dhātupāṭha* explains by *dainye*. The corresponding Sanskrit word was no doubt, *gepya*—*glepya* literally 'the poor' or 'wretched.'"—Bühler.

[5] *Chapala* is, of course, 'the fickle-minded.' *Samādapayitave* is the infinitive of *samādāpeti*, the causal form of *samā*+*dā*, which means "to take upon oneself, solemnly undertake, generally used of a religious undertaking or vow to fulfil some or all of the religious precepts, either for a time or permanently"—Childers. This suits here excellently. What Aśoka means is that his officials are able or fit enough to cause or induce the fickle-minded people to take upon themselves the performance of some or all the precepts of Dhaṁma prescribed by him.

II

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: Dhaṁma is excellent. But what does Dhaṁma consist of? (Of these things:) little sinfulness,[1] much good, mercy, gift, truthfulness, purity. The gift of sight[2] have I given in manifold ways; (and) various favours to bipeds and quadrupeds, to birds and aquatic animals, even up to the boon of life. And much other good have I done. For this purpose I have caused this *Dhaṁmalipi* to be engraved, that they may follow (me) and that it may long endure.[3] He who acts thus will do what is good.

Notes.

[1] In the next edict *āsinava* is taken as allied to *pāpa*. This may be compared to *parisrave* of R.E., X. where it is taken to be identical with *apuṁne*. This makes Senart's derivation of *āsinava* from *ā* + *sru* more probable than that of Bühler from *ā* + *snu*. For the correct meaning of the word, see *Above*, pp. 126 and ff.

[2] Senart's "interpretation of *chakhudāne* by *cha khu dāne* cannot stand, because the enclitic words *cha* and *khu* cannot begin a sentence, and because the continuousness of the syllables in the text does not permit their being taken as parts of two sentences"—Bühler. *Chakhu* = 'spiritual insight,'—Bühler. But it had rather be taken in its physical sense, and probably refers to the remission of such punishment as that of "eye for eye, tooth for tooth." This agrees with *ā-pāna-dakhinā*, 'Even the boon of life'—Bühler, and not 'even to securing them water'—Senart.

[3] Compare this with the concluding portion of RE. V and VI.

III

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: "(A person) seeth his good deed only, (saying unto himself:) 'This good deed has been done by me.'[1] In no wise[2] doth he see (his) sin, (saying unto himself:) 'this sin have I committed,' or 'this, indeed, is a defilement.' This, however, is (something) where self-examination is difficult.[3] Nevertheless, (a person) should see to this, (and say unto himself): 'these (passions), indeed, lead to defilement, such as impetuosity, cruelty, anger, pride, malice, and by reason (of them) I may cause my fall.'[4] This should certainly be seen to—'this conduces to my good here below, and this also[5] to my good in the world to come.'

Notes.

[1] Compare this to the initial portion of R.E. V.

[2] *No mina* = *no manāk*, 'not in the least, in no wise'—Bühler.

[3] *Paṭivekha*, as pointed out by Senart, is the same as the Pāli *pachchavekkhanam*, 'self-examination.' He refers to a passage from the *Visuddhimagga*, quoted by Childers *sub voce*. *Above*, pp. 105 and ff.

[4] Senart takes *isyā* separately from *māne*, and joins it to *kālanena* which follows it. But this proposal, says

Bühler rightly, is barred by the fact that all versions have breaks between the two words. The root in *palibhasayisaṁ* is *palibhāsati*, 'to calumniate,' 'to defame'—Senart. Bühler takes it as equivalent to *paribhraṁśayishyāmi*, which is better.

[5] Michelson rightly translates *mana* by 'also.'

IV

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods; This *Dhammalipi* was caused to be written by me when I had been crowned twenty-six years. The Rajjukas have been set [1] by me over people (consisting of) many hundred thousands of souls. I have made them self-dependent in their judicial investigation and punishment,[2]—why?—in order that the Rajjukas may perform their duties with confidence and without fear, cause welfare and happiness to the people of the provinces and confer favours (upon them). They will make themselves acquainted with what gives happiness or pain, and exhort the people of the provinces along with the faithful [3]—how?—so that they may gain happiness in this world and in the next. The Rajjukas are eager to obey me.[4] And just because the Rajjukas desire to obey me, (subordinate) officers also will obey my wishes and orders,[5] and will also exhort some (people). Certainly, just as (a person) feels confident after making over his offspring

to a clever nurse, (saying unto himself) 'the clever nurse desires to bring up my offspring,' even so have I appointed the Rajjukas for the welfare and happiness of the provincials, in order that they may perform their duties without fear, with confidence, and without perplexity. For this reason I have made Rajjukas self-dependent in respect of judicial investigation and punishment. For this is desirable,—what?—uniformity of judicial investigation and uniformity of punishment. And even so far goes my order: To men who are bound with fetters, on whom punishment has been passed and who have been condemned to death, have I granted three days as something rightfully and exclusively their own.[6] Either (their) relatives will (in that interval) make some (of the Rajjukas) relent in order to save their life; or, to stay the end, namely, (spiritual) destruction, they will give alms and observe fasts pertaining to the next world.[7] For my desire is that even during the time of imprisonment,[8] they may try to win the bliss of the next world and that manifold pious practices, self-restraint and liberality may grow among the people.

Notes.

[1] The word *āyata* occurs also in PE. VII (2), l. i. and SE. I. l. 4. Senart seems right in recognising here an instance of the popular confusion between *āyatta* and *āyutta*.

[2] *Atapatiye*, corresponding to *ātmapatya*, is a substantive formed after the analogy of *ādhipatya*, and so forth.

Abhihāra means 'honour, honorarium' according to Bühler, who refers us to Jat., Vol. V, p. 58, v. 143 and p. 59, l. 28 f., where the commentary explains the word by *pūjā*. But, as Senart has shown, we have further on in this edict a direct parallelism between *abhihāla* and *daṁḍa* on the one side and *viyohāla-samatā* and *daṁḍa-samatā*, on the other. *Abhihāra* must therefore be here equivalent to *vyavahāra*. As *vyavahāra*, again, is here mentioned side by side, and contrasted, with *daṇḍa*, it cannot merely be 'a legal dispute' or 'a law suit' but rather 'judicial procedure, trial or investigation of a case.' What Aśoka means when he says that he made the Rajjukas self-dependent in regard to *vyavahāra* and *daṇḍa* has been explained. *Above*, pp. 69-71.

Asvatha is from *āśvas*, for a note on which by F. W. Thomas, see JRAS., 1915, pp. 106 and ff.

[3] *Dhaṁmayutena cha viyovadisaṁti janaṁ jānapadaṁ* of this Edict may be compared to *hevaṁ cha hevaṁ cha paliyovadātha janaṁ dhaṁmayutaṁ* of PE. VII. This shows that *dhaṁmayutena* of the former cannot be taken to mean "in accordance with the principles of the sacred law" (Bühler), but rather "at the same time as the faithful" (Senart).

[4] Senart corrects *laghaṁti* into *chaghaṁti*. This is inadmissible, because all the versions have *laghaṁti*. Bühler takes *laghaṁti* to be the representative of Sk. *raghaṁte*, 'they hasten, are eager.' Senart is, however, right in taking *paṭichalati* as *paricharati*, meaning 'to serve, obey.' Compare *paribhogāya* of Girnār with *paṭibhogāya* of other recensions at the end of RE. II.

[5] *Chhaṁdaṁnāni* Bühler takes as a Tatpurusha compound going with *pulisāni* and signifying *chhaṁdaṁ jānāt=iti chhaṁdajñāḥ*, 'knowing the will.' Senart explains it as a Dvandva compound *chhaṁdaś=cha ājñā cha*, and takes it as the accusative of *paṭichalisaṁti*. Bühler objects to this interpretation on the ground that there is no instance of any feminine *ā* being declined as a neuter *a*. But we know that in the language of our inscriptions there is a great confusion of genders. In the Rupnath MRE. we have *kāla* declined as if the word was *kālā*. This is a very clear instance, but it is only one instance, where masculine *a* is declined like feminine *ā*. Why not take similarly that in PE. IV., we have an instance, though it is only one

instance, where feminine *ā* is declined like neuter *a*. Again, *chhaṁdaṁnāni* is separated from *pulisāni* in all recensions, but is joined to *paṭichalisaṁti* at least in one recension. This shows that *chhaṁdaṁnāni* goes rather with *paṭichalisaṁti* as its accusative than with *pulisāni* as its adjective. The meaning also is quite clear, if we accept Senart's procedure. If Rajjukas, who are functionaries of a very high order, obey Aśoka, the Purushas or minor officials must follow in their footsteps. Bühler, however, would lead us to suppose that the Purushas, though they are minor officials, are to be an example for the Rajjukas to imitate.

Senart takes *chaghati* as standing for *chagghati* and as alteration of *jāgrati*, like *pati-jaggati*, 'to take care, watch.' Grierson derives it from a root *chagh* 'to rise, ascend,' found in the Chhattisgarhi dialect and traces it to the Sanskrit *chargh* 'to go' (JPTS., 1891-3, pp. 28 and ff.). Kern explains the verb *chagh* by the Hindi *chāh-nā*, and Bühler agrees in this view and adds that *chāh* occurs in all Indian vernaculars and must therefore belong to the ancient stock of Aryan speech

[6] *Yote* Kern rightly connects with the Sanskrit *Yautaka*, and is taken by European scholars in the sense of 'respite.' But *Yautaka* does not mean 'respite,' but 'something exclusively and rightfully belonging to a person.' This sense is by no means inapplicable here. What Aśoka means is that such culprits as have been sentenced to death can claim three days of grace as a matter of right.

[7] This is the most knotty passage in the edict. Senart: "my officers will warn (*nijhapayisaṁti*) them that they have neither more nor less (*nātikāvakāni*) to live (*jīvitāye tānaṁ*). Warned thus (*nijhapayitā*) as to the limit of their existence (*nāsaṁtaṁ*) they may give (*dāhaṁti*) alms (*dānaṁ*) in view of their future life (*pālatkam*), or may give themselves up to fasting (*upavāsaṁ vā kiachhaṁti*)

Bühler: "Their relatives (*nātikā*) will make some. of them (*kāni*) meditate deeply (*nijhapayisaṁti*) and in order to save the lives of those men (*jīvitāye tānaṁ*) or in order to make (the condemned) who is to be executed (*nāsaṁtaṁ*) mediate deeply (*nijhapayitā*), they will give gifts with a view to the next world or will perform fasts." Bühler explains his translation as follows: "During the respite of three days the relatives will exhort the condemned criminals

to turn their thoughts to higher things, and they will give religious gifts (not bribes to the Lajukas) or undergo fasts, hoping that either the lives of the condemned may be spared, or that at least the hearts of those who must die, will be softened and turn heavenwards."

Not many years ago I rendered the passage in my M.A. classes as follows: "Their relatives will make some (of them) reflect on Dhaṁma (*nijhapayisaṁti*) to save their life, and to cause the perishing one (*nāsaṁtaṁ*) to reflect, they will give alms with a view to the next world and observe fasts." What I then meant was that Aśoka granted a reprieve to those criminals only, who, though they were condemned to death, embraced his Dhaṁma. And this sense seems to be the same as that adopted in an article published in JBORS. VI., 318 and ff. Now, however, I deduce a different sense from the passage, which I translate as follows: "(Their) relatives will soften some (of the Rajjukas) to save the lives of those (condemned to death); or to stay the end, *viz.*, destruction, they will give alms with a view to the next world or observe fasts." Much depends upon the meaning we assign to the word *nijhapayisaṁti*. If we trace this verb to *ni*+*dhyai* as has been done by F. W. Thomas (JRAS., 1916, pp. 120 and ff.), the interpretation first proposed by me would be the proper one. But Lüders has drawn our attention to the word occurring in two verses in the Ayoghara-Jātaka (*Jāt.*, Vol. IV, vs. 332 and 334), which has the sense of 'to soften, arrest' and has been used in one instance with special reference to the punishment inflicted by kings. This sense fits better, and the passage is susceptible of a more natural interpretation. Aśoka again is freed from the charge of defeating the end of justice for the sake of his Dhaṁma.

8. *Niludhasi pi kālasi* is taken by Senart as 'during the time of their imprisonment,' Bühler 'even during their imprisonment,' Lüders 'even in a limited time,' and Thomas "though their hour of death is irrevocably fixed (there being no *nijhati*)" (JRAS., 1916, p. 123). Compare Manu, VIII, 310.

V

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods:—When I had been consecrated twenty-six years, the following animals[1] were declared unworthy of slaughter, namely, parrots, starlings, ruddy geese,[2] swans, *Nandimukhas*,[3] *Gelaṭas*, flying-foxes, queen-ants, female tortoises, boneless fish, *vedaveyakas*, *Gaṅgā-papuṭakas*, skates, tortoises and porcupines, hare-like squirrels, twelve-antler stags, bulls set free, household vermins, rhinoceros, grey doves, village pigeons, and all quadrupeds which are neither used nor eaten.[4] She-goats, ewes, and sows, which are with young or in milk, are unworthy of slaughter, and some of their young ones up to six months of age. Cocks shall not be caponed. Chaff containing living things shall not be burnt. Forests shall not be set on fire either for mischief or for the destruction of life. The living shall not be fed with the living. About the full moon of each of the three seasons[5] and the full moon of Taisha, fish may neither be killed nor sold during three days, namely, the fourteenth (and) the fifteenth (of the fortnight) and the first (of the following fortnight), and certainly not on fast days. On the same days these and other species of life also shall not be killed in the elephant forest and fish preserves.

On the eighth of (each) fortnight and on the fourteenth and fifteenth, on the Tishya and Punarvasu days, on the full-moon days of the three seasons,—on (such) auspicious days, bulls shall not be castrated: he-goats, rams, boars and such others as are castrated shall not be castrated. On the Tishya and Punarvasu days, on the full-moon days of the seasons, and during the fortnights connected with the full-moons of the seasons, the branding of horses and oxen shall not be done. Twenty-five jail deliveries have been effected by me, who am consecrated twenty-six years, just in that period.[6]

Notes.

[1] *Jāta* literally means 'a born being.' Here it has been rendered by 'animals.'

[2] *Aluna* has been taken as a separate name. It had better be taken as an attributive of *chakavāke* after the analogy of *anaṭhika-machhe* and *saṁkuja-machhe.*

[3] In connection with the different species of life mentioned in this edict, Monmohan Chakravarti's monograph on *Animals in the Inscriptions of Piyadasi* published as *Memoir* of the As. Soc. Bengal, Vol. I, No. 17, may be read with great profit. Compare also Manu XI, 136-7. What is worthy of note is that Aśoka lays an embargo on the slaughter of those animals only that are neither eaten nor used for any purpose. Hence *ja·ūkā* should be taken to stand for 'flying-foxes' (Bengali, *chāmchikā*) whose flesh is not taken, and not for bats (Bengali, *bāduḍ*) whose flesh is eaten at least by the lower classes. Bühler has rightly interpreted *ambā-kapīlikā* as mother-ant; *i.e.*, queen-ant, the Sanskrit *pipīlikā* having the Pali form *kipillika*. *Daḍi* = (Sk.) *duḍī* = particular type of female tortoise. *Anaṭhika* = *anasthika* = 'boneless,' the boneless fish being 'prawns' according to Senart and Bühler.

Saṁkuja-machhe lit. means the fish that can contract or withdraw itself in, and has therefore been taken to stand for 'skate fish.' *Kaphaṭa* = *kamaṭha* = tortoise (Senart). *Seyaka* = (Sk.) *śalyaka* = porcupine. *Paṁnasasa* lit. means a hare-like animal living in the leaves of trees and has been taken by Bühler to denote the large white-bellied, red-squirrel which is found in the forests of the Western Ghats and whose skinned body looks exactly like that of a hare. *Simale* = *Sṛimara* = *Bārāshing* or twelve-antler stag. *Ṣaṁḍake* corresponds to the vernacular *sāṇḍ*, 'a bull which has been set at liberty and cannot therefore be killed.' *Okapiṁḍa* Senart connects with the *uk apiṇḍa* of the Mahāvagga which are said to eat the provisions of the monks and are, according to Buddhaghosha, 'cats, mice, iguanas and mungooses.' This fits excellently, because these animals are neither eaten nor utilised for any other purposes. Hence they should not be killed simply because they destroy household provisions. *Palasate* = (Pāli) *palāsādo* or *parasato* = rhinoceros (Bühler). *Above*, pp. 178 and ff.

4 *Paṭibhoga* is, of course, *paribhoga* 'enjoyment' as contrasted with 'nourishment.' Aśoka here evidently "means to forbid the slaughter of all animals, whose skins, fur, feathers, etc., are not required, as well as of those which are not eaten." *Above*, pp. 150 and ff.

5 Chātuṁmāsi (= Sk. *chāturmāsī*) is the full moon of each one of the three seasons, Summer, Autumn and Winter. It is the full moon of the initial month of each season. *Tisā puṁnamāsī* is the full-moon of Taisha or Pausha. Posatha stands midway between the Buddhist Pāli *uposatha* and the Jaina Prākrit *posaha*. It corresponds to the Brahmanical Parvan days, and denotes the 8th and 15th day of each fortnight. Piyadasi thus forbade the sale of fish on 56 days: (1) six in each initial month of the three seasons and in the Taisha or Pausha month, *viz.*, the 8th, 14th and 15th of the bright fortnight and the 1st, 8th and 15th of the dark,—thus in all 24; (2) four in the remaining eight months, *viz.*, the 8th and 15th of each fortnight,—thus 32 in all. The whole total comes to 24 + 32 = 56 days, on which Aśoka prohibited the killing and sale of fish.

6 Various are the occasions on which jail deliveries are made by kings. One such occasion is the birth-day

of a king when, the Arthaśāstra (p. 146) lays down, he shall set free such prisoners as are children or aged, diseased or helpless persons. This fits here admirably, first because this edict, which is intended for the prevention not of wholesale slaughter but of wanton and unnecessary butchery and injury, cannot be taken to refer to the wholesale or promiscuous liberation of prisoners but of such prisoners only, in whose case imprisonment would be a wanton and unnecessary cruelty. Secondly, as, during twenty-six years no less than twenty-five jail-deliveries were effected, they most probably refer to the setting-free of prisoners on Aśoka's birth-day and further show that the regnal years mentioned in his inscriptions must be, not elapsed, but current, years of his reign. (*Above*, p. 10.)

VI

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: "Since I was crowned twelve years, I have caused *Dhaṁma-lipis* to be written for the welfare and happiness of the people, so that giving up that (conduct), (the officers) might nurture[1] this and that growth of Dhaṁma. (Perceiving): "thus (lies) the welfare and happiness of the people," I scrutinise[2] them, both those who are far and near, as I do my relatives. Why so? In order that I might cause happiness to some (among people). And I act accordingly. Thus do I scrutinise all classes (of officials). All sects I have honoured with various honours; but voluntary advances[3] (to another sect) are considered by me as the

chief thing. This *Dhaṁma-lipi* has been caused to be written by me when crowned twenty-six years.

Notes.

[1] For *pāpova*, see H. K. Deb in JASB., 1920, pp. 336-7. The subject to this verb is *nikāya* which occurs further on but which is understood here. *Nikāya*, which is found also at the end of RE. XII., denotes classes of officials.

[2] The meaning of the root *paṭivekh* is determined by *paṭivekhā* which occurs in PE. III.

[3] *pachūpagamana*=*pratyupagamana*=advancing towards to meet or greet. Compare this part with the gist of RE. XII.

VII

Translation.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: "In times past there were kings (who) wished thus: 'how may men grow with the growth of Dhaṁma?' But men did not grow with a befitting growth of Dhaṁma. On this king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, saith thus: 'This occurred to me: in times past kings had wished that men should grow with a befitting growth of Dhaṁma. But men did not grow with befitting growth of Dhaṁma. How then may men be moved to conform (to Dhaṁma)? How may men grow with a befitting growth of Dhaṁma? How may I uplift some among them with a growth of Dhaṁma?" On this king Priyadarśin, Beloved

of the gods, saith thus: "this occurred to me. 'Proclamations of Dhaṁma will I proclaim. Instructions in Dhaṁma will I instruct. Men, hearkening thereto, will conform, uplift themselves, and mightily grow with the growth of Dhaṁma.' For this purpose have I proclaimed proclamations of Dhaṁma, and directed various instructions in Dhaṁma. My Officers, the Vyūthas,[1] have been set over many people. These will preach and disseminate it. Rajjukas have been set over many hundred thousands of lives. They too have been ordered: "Preach thus and thus to the faithful men."

Thus saith Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: 'On the roads have I planted the banyan trees. They will offer shade to man and beast. I have grown mango-orchards. I have caused wells to be dug at every eight *koses*;[2] and I have had rest-houses. I have made many waiting sheds at different places for the enjoyment of man and beast. This (provision of) enjoyment, however, is, indeed, a trifle, because mankind has been blessed with many such blessings by the previous kings as by me. But I have done this with the intent that men may practise (such) practices of Dhaṁma.

Thus saith Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: The Dharma-Mahāmātras have been appointed by me for various matters of charity. They are engaged with all sects,—the ascetics and the

householders. I have arranged that they shall be occupied with the business of the Saṁgha. Likewise I have arranged that they shall be occupied with the Brāhmaṇic Ājīvikas, the Nirgranthas, and the various sects. The various Mahāmātras are for various (classes of men) and for various specific functions. But I have appointed Dharma-Mahāmātras only for these and all other sects.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: These and many other head officers [3] are employed in the distribution of bounties, both my own and those of the Queens, and in all my gynaeceum, both here and in the provinces, they put forth various satisfactory efforts [4] and in manifold ways. And I have arranged that they shall be occupied with the distribution of the bounties, both of my sons and of other sons of Queens, for the development of Dhaṁma and for conformity to Dhaṁma. And this development of Dhaṁma and conformity to Dhaṁma, which consist of mercy, gift, truthfulness, purity, gentleness and charity will thus grow among the people.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: "Whatever charitable works I have performed, these have been conformed to among men, and these they will perform (in future). They have thereby grown and will grow in respect of hearkening to father and mother,

hearkening to preceptors, following in the footsteps of the aged, and seemly behaviour towards Brāhmaṇs, and Śramaṇas, towards the poor and the wretched, and even towards slaves and servants.

Thus saith king Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: "And men have grown this growth of Dhaṁma in two ways, namely, through restriction of Dhaṁma and (wholesale) prohibition.[5] And in this matter restrictions of Dhaṁma are of small account, and much more has been done through (wholesale) prohibition. The restrictions of Dhaṁma, indeed, are such as have been adopted by me, namely, that 'such and such species (of creatures) shall be exempt from slaughter,' and numerous other restrictions of Dhaṁma effected by me. But through (wholesale) prohibition such as non-injury to (all) creatures and non-slaughter of (all) life, the growth of Dhaṁma has been fostered much more among men. For this purpose has this engraving been done, in order that my sons and grandsons may continue as long as the sun and the moon endure and in this way follow (in my footsteps). By thus following (in my footsteps) both this world and the next are secured. This *Dhaṁma-lipi* was caused to be engraved by me when I had been anointed twenty-seven years.

Concerning this the Beloved of the gods saith: this *Dhaṁma-lipi* should be inscribed

where stone pillars or tablets are found, so that it may long endure.

Notes.

[1] For the possibly correct reading *vyūthā* here instead of *yathā*, see IA., 1912, p. 173.

[2] For *aḍhakosikyāni*, see Fleet's note in *JRAS.* 1906, pp. 40 and ff. For *niṁsidhiyā*, EI., II. 274.

[3] Mukha is taken by Senart in the sense of 'intermediaries' and by Bühler "chief officials." F. W. Thomas draws our attention to the various places in which the term *mukhya* occurs in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra (JRAS., 1915, pp. 97-9). He, however, somewhat confounds *mukhya* with *mukha*. The Arthaśāstra seems to confirm Bühler's reading.

[4] Bühler takes *tūṭhāyatanāni* as *tushṭy-āyatanāni* that is, 'sources of contentment,' 'opportunities for charity.' As *āyatana* is derived from *ā+yat* 'to strive, to endeavour,' it is better to take the word in the sense of 'effort, endeavour.'

[5] For *nijhati*, see the concluding portion of n. 7 on PE. IV. For the interpretation of the passage, see *above*, pp. 152 and ff.

MINOR ROCK INSCRIPTIONS.

A—Separate Kalinga Edicts.

I

By command of the Beloved of gods, the Mahāmātras of Tosali (or Samāpā) who are the City Judiciaries should be addressed thus: Whatever I perceive (with the mind), I desire—what?—that I may put it into action; and I initiate it through the (proper) means. And I deem this to be the principal means to the end, namely, instructions to you. You have indeed been set over many thousands of lives in order that we may gain the affection of good men. All men are my offspring. Just as for (my) offspring I desire that they be united with all welfare and happiness of this world and of the next, precisely do I desire it for all men. But you do not realise it as far as this thing is indicated. Some individual (official) pays heed to it, but he to a part only, not to the whole. See to this then. The maxim of conduct also is well laid down. It may be that an individual incurs imprisonment or harassment. There it causelessly leads to imprisonment or death.[1] Many other people again are intensely tortured. Consequently you should desire—what?—to follow the

middle path. No one can act in a seemly manner with such dispositions as envy, want of perseverance, harshness, hastiness, want of application, laziness, and sense of lassitude. Hence you should desire—what?—that these dispositions may not be yours. And the root of all this is perseverance and avoidance of hastiness. This is the maxim of conduct: namely, 'He who is depressed should rise up to move forward.' And one ought to move, go forward and advance. This is the maxim of conduct which you should consider. Say then (unto yourselves, and) look to nothing else: "Thus and thus are the instructions of the Beloved of gods. Fulfilment of it bears great fruit, non-fulfilment great harm. By those who ill perform it neither heaven nor royal favour can be gained." This duty (imposed) by me has thus a two-fold consequence. Why any doubt in your mind? If it is well performed, you will gain heaven and also discharge your debt to me.

And this document should be heard under the constellation of Tishya, and on every festive occasion in between the Tishya days it may be heard even by one (official). And acting thus, endeavour to fulfil (my instructions). For this purpose has this document been here written: in order that the Mahāmātras who are the City Judiciaries may be devoted to the established rule of conduct, and that arbitrary

imprisonment or arbitrary harassment of the townspeople may not take place. And for this purpose, as required by Dhaṁma, I shall cause (an officer) to go forth on tour every five years,[2] who will be neither harsh nor fiery (but) gentle in action. Being aware of this object, they will act according to my instructions. But from Ujjain the royal prince will send forth (officers) of this class and will not overstep three years. In like manner from Takshaśilā. When those Mahāmātras go forth on tour, without neglecting their own function they will mind this also and act according to the instructions of the king.

[1] This is the most difficult passage of the Edict. What Aśoka apparently means is that when an individual is imprisoned or harassed, through one foible or another of the officials mentioned below, that harassment causelessly develops into imprisonment, or imprisonment into death.

[2] Above, pp. 65-6.

II

By command of the Beloved of gods, the Prince Royal and the Mahāmātras should be addressed (as follows): Whatever I perceive (with the mind), I desire—what—that I may put it into action; and I initiate it through the (proper) means. And I deem this to be the principal means to this end, namely, instructions

to you. All men are my offspring. Just as for (my) offspring I desire that they may be united with all welfare and happiness of this world and of the next, precisely do I desire it for all men.

If you ask: what indeed is my desire towards the neighbours in order to know 'what is the will of the king for us in respect of his unsubdued neighbours,' the reply is: they should understand that the Beloved of gods desires that they should be unperturbed towards me, they should trust mine, (and) they would receive from me happiness, not misery. And they should further understand: 'the king will bear with us as far as it is possible to bear," (but) they should follow Dhaṁma for my sake in order that they might gain this world and the next. For this end do I instruct you. Having given you instructions and made known my will, nay, my immovable resolve and vow, may I be free from debt (to them)! So acting accordingly, you must discharge your functions and must inspire them with confidence, so that they might understand: 'the king is to us even as a father; he sympathises with us even as he sympathises with himself; we are to the king even as (his) children.' So having instructed you and intimated the will, my immovable resolve and vow, I shall remain, with you as my local ministers,[1] for this business. For you are competent to inspire them with confidence and (ensure)

their welfare and happiness of this world and the next. By so doing, you will gain heaven and also discharge your debt to me.

And for this purpose has this document been here written : in order that the Mahāmātras may be devoted to the established rule of conduct for inspiring those neighbours with confidence and ensuring (their) practice of Dhaṁma. And this document should be heard on the Tishya day of four-monthly season ; and, indeed, on every festive occasion in between the Tishya days it may be heard even by one (official). By acting thus, endeavour to fulfil (my instructions).

[1] *Desāvutike* is a knotty phrase and has exercised scholars. Senart : "I shall possess in you, for this object, persons fit to actively carry out my orders." Bühler : "I shall have superintendents in *all* countries as far as this matter *is concerned*." Bühler has apparently lost sight of the word (*tu*)*phāka* in this connection. Āyukta means 'a minister, an agent or deputy.' What Aśoka means is that they are his local deputies who can carry out his intentions towards the frontier peoples.

•

MINOR ROCK INSCRIPTIONS.

I

BRAHMAGIRI

By command of the Prince [1] and the Mahāmātras from Suvarṇagiri, the Mahāmātras at Isila should be asked (their) health, and (then) addressed as follows: "The Beloved of gods saith: 'It was more than two years and a half that I was a lay-worshipper but did not exert myself strenuously. It is one year, indeed, more than one year that I have lived with the Saṁgha [2] and have exerted myself; but during this period men who were unmixed, were caused to be mixed, with gods throughout Jambudvīpa.[3] [R.—During this period gods, who were unmixed, were caused to be mixed, (with men), throughout Jambudvīpa.] For this is the fruit of exertion. This is to be attained not by the superior one [4] only. But, indeed it is possible for even a subordinate one, if he exerts himself, to cause (people) to attain much heavenly bliss. For this purpose this proclamation has been made; namely, in order that the subordinate ones and the superior ones shall exert themselves to this (end), that my neighbours should know this and that this exertion may long endure. And

this object shall grow, indeed shall grow profusely, shall grow (at least) one-and-a-half fold. And this proclamation has been proclaimed by 256 Vyushṭas.[5] ' "

SAHASRAM

This proclamation (has been made) by Vyushṭas, 256 (in number), because two hundred individuals increased by fifty-six have gone forth on tour (*vivutha-vyushṭā*).[5] And have ye this matter engraved on hills, and have it engraved also where there are stone columns.

RUPNATH

Have this matter engraved on hills. Here and afar off where there is any stone column, have it engraved on the stone column. And with this verbal order go ye forth on tour everywhere so far as your jurisdiction extends. The proclamation has been made by 256 Vyushṭas, (the figure indicating) the settings out on tour of (as many) individuals.

Notes.

[1] In the *Vienna Or. Jour.*, XII. 75-6, Bühler has conclusively proved on the strength of the Khaṇḍahāla Jātaka (Jāt. no. 542) that *ayyaputta* means 'a prince.'

[2] For further elucidation, see *above*, pp. 78-81.

[3] Above, p. 134; IA., 1912, pp. 170-1. Compare with this *Saha-deva-manushyāḥ asmiṁl-loke purā babhūvuḥ*—*Apastambīya-Dharmasūtra*, p. 76 (Bo. Sk. Series).

[4] The superior ones and the subordinate ones here referred to stand for the superior and the subordinate class of officials. Compare this edict with RE.X. and read n. 2 above.

[5] IA., 1908, p. 21; JA., Mai-Juin 1910; JRAS. 1913, p. 477. Also JRAS., 1910, pp. 142 and 1308; 1911, p. 1114; 1913, p. 1053; JA., Jan.-Feb. 1911. For my interpretation, see IA., 1912, pp. 171-3.

Bibliography.

Bühler, G.—IA., 1893, pp. 209-306; 1897, p. 334. EI., Vol. III, pp. 135-42.

Sastri, H. Krishna—The new Asokan Edict of Maski (Hyderabad Archaeological Series, no. I).

Hultzsch, E.— ZDMG., Vol. 70, pp. 539-41.

II

Translation.

Even thus saith the Beloved of gods:—'Father and mother should be hearkened to: Likewise, respect for living creatures should be made firm. Truth should be spoken.' These are the qualities of Dhaṁma which should be practised. Likewise, the preceptor should be reverenced by the pupil; and one should behave oneself fittingly towards the blood-relatives. This natural constitution [1] (of the human mind) is primeval; and it is long-enduring. Hence it should be acted upon.

Written by Paḍa the scribe.

Notes.

[1] *Above*, p. 174.

Bhabru Inscription

Translation.

Priyadarśin, king of Magadha, bids the Saṁgha (his) greetings and wishes of good health and comfortable living. Ye know, Reverend Sirs, how great are my respect and delight in Buddha, Dhaṁma, and Saṁgha. Whatever, Reverend Sirs, has been said by the Blessed Buddha all that has been well said. But, Reverend Sirs, whatever I ought on my own account to recommend in order that the sublime Dhaṁma may thus endure long, I deem it proper to proclaim. Reverend Sirs, these are the texts of Dhaṁma: (1) *Vinaya-samukase*, (2) *Aliya-vasāni*, (3) *Anāgata-bhayāni*, (4) *Muni-gāthā*, (5) *Moneya-sute*, (6) *Upatisa-pasina*, and (7) the Sermon to Rāhula pronounced by the Blessed Buddha concerning 'falsehood.'[1] These texts of Dhaṁma, Reverend Sirs, I desire the majority of monks and nuns to constantly hear and meditate upon. Similarly, the laity, male and female, (should do the same). It is for this reason, Reverend Sirs, that I cause this to be engraved; in order that they may know my wish.

Notes.

[1] *Above*, pp. 86-8; JRAS., 1889, p. 639; 1901, pp. 311, 577; 1911, p. 1113; 1913, p. 385; 1915, p. 805; IA., 1891, p. 165; 1912, p. 37; 1919, p. 8; JA., Mai-Juin 1896. Max Walleser, *Das Edikt von Bhabra* (*Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismas*); E. Leumann, *Das Bhabra-Edict des Königs Aśoka* (*Zeit. Indol. Iran.* Oct. 2, 1923, pp. 316 and ff).

MINOR PILLAR INSCRIPTIONS.

RUMMINDEI (PADERIA INSCRIPTION).

Translation.

King Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, when he had been consecrated twenty years, came in the person and did worship.[1] Because here the Śākya Sage, Buddha, was born, he caused a huge stone wall[2] to be made and a stone pillar to be erected. Because here the Blessed One was born, the village of Lumminī was freed from religious cesses and made to contribute one-eighth share (only, as land revenue).[3]

Notes.

[1] Above, p. 72.

[2] The letters *silāvigaḍabhīchā* were previously divided by scholars into most embarrassing words, but Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar was the first to show that this was really one phrase, meaning "an enclosure or railing made of stone" (JBBRAS., Vol. XX, p. 366, n. 14). Fleet substantially agrees with him (JRAS., 1908, pp. 476-7 and p. 823). Personally I take the letters to stand for *silā-vigaḍa-bhīchā* (*śilāvikaṭa-bhittāni*), meaning "huge stone walls" such as was constructed at Nagari in honour of Vāsudeva-Samkarshaṇa (MASI., No. 4, p. 129). For previous explanations, see EI., Vol. V, p. 5; S.B. Pr. A.W., 1903, pp. 724 ff; IA., 1905, pp. 1 ff; 1914, pp. 19-20.

[3] F. W. Thomas was the first to take *bali* rightly in the sense of 'religious cess' (JRAS., 1909, pp. 466-7).

For his correct interpretation of *aṭha-bhāgiya*, see JRAS., 1914, pp. 391-2.

Bibliography.

Bühler, G.—EI., Vol. V, pp. 4 and ff.

Smith, V. A.—IA., 1905, pp. 1 and ff.; and Intro. to Mukherji's Report on Antiquities in the Tarai, Nepal, Calcutta, 1901.

Fleet, J. F.—JRAS., 1908, pp. 471 and ff.

Charpentier, J.—IA., 1914, pp. 17 and ff.

NIGLIVA INSCRIPTION.

Translation.

King Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods, when he had been consecrated fourteen years, enlarged for the second time the *stūpa* of Buddha Konākamana. And when he had been consecrated (twenty) years, he came in person, did worship, and had (a stone pillar) erected.

INSCRIPTION ON THE SARNATH PILLAR.

Translation.

Thus orders King Priyadarśin, Beloved of the gods: ....Pāṭaliputra..............the Saṁgha may not be divided by any one. But whosoever breaks the Saṁgha, be it monk or nun, shall be clad in white raiment, and compelled to live in what is not a residence [1] (of the clergy). Thus should this order be announced

to the congregation of the monks and the congregation of the nuns.

Thus saith Beloved of the gods: One such document has been put up in the place of assembly in order that it may be accessible to you.[2] And put up just another document so as to be accessible to the laity. And the laity should come every fast day and assure themselves of that same order. And certainly on all fast days as each Mahāmātra comes in his turn (to the head-quarters) for the fast day, he should assure himself of that same order and understand it. And so far as your jurisdiction[3] goes, you must set out on tour with this word (of command). So too in all fortified towns and (the) district sub-divisions,[4] you must cause others to go out on tour with this word (of command).

Notes.

[1] The robes of a Buddhist monk are yellow-coloured, and when he is given white robes, it means that he is unfrocked (Oldenberg's *Vinayapiṭaka*, Vol. III, p. 312, L. 18; also JASB., 1908, pp. 7-10). As regards *anāvāse*, see Buddhaghosha's explanation in SBE., XVII, p. 388, n. 1.

[2] The king is, of course, addressing himself to the Mahāmātras; and not to the Bhikshus as supposed by some. The dictionary meanings of *saṁsaraṇa* are 'highway,' 'meeting or junction' and so on, and the word in the present case most probably denotes the *Kacheri* of the district town, which is both on the highway and a common place of meeting. F. W. Thomas' reference to the word in the *Chullavagga* (JRAS., 1915, pp. 109-111) may also denote the standardised type of the *Kacheri* structure.

[3] Āhāra means 'a district,' and is frequently found used in this sense in early inscriptions. For *vivāsayātha* and general interpretation of this passage, see IA., 1912, p. 172.

[4] Every district (*āhāra*) has more than one Sub-division (*vishaya*) or Taluk as it is now called. The principal town of each Sub-division must have been a fortified place, EI., VIII, 171.

Bibliography.

Vogel, J. Ph.—EI., Vol. VIII, pp. 166 and ff.

Venis, Arthur—JASB., 1907, pp. 1 and ff.

Senart, E.—Comptes rendus de l'Academie Inscriptions, 1907, p. 25.

Boyer—JA., tome X (1907), p. 119.

Inscription on the Sanchi Pillar.

[Facsimile of this epigraph may be seen in EI., II, on plate facing p. 369. It is accompanied by a transcript by Bühler, which has recently been considerably corrected by Prof. Hultzsch with the help of excellent estampages supplied by the Archaeological Dopartment. His amended reading is contained in JRAS., 1911, pp. 167-9.]

Translation.

A path has been made whether for the monks or for the nuns. May my sons and grandsons continue as long as the sun and the moon endure so that whosoever breaks the Saṁgha, be it monk or nun, shall be clad in white raiment and compelled to live in what is not a residence (of the clergy). For my desire is—what is it?—that the Saṁgha, remaining on the path, may be of long duration.

Inscriptions on the Allahabad Pillar.

A. [This also specifies the penalty of schism and is a replica of the preceding two. Very little of this epigraph has been preserved and the only new and important fact revealed by it is that it contains an order of Aśoka addressed to his Mahāmātras in Kauśāmbī, showing clearly where the pillar was originally put up.]

B. The Queen's Edict.

Translation.

By command of the Beloved of the gods the Mahāmātras should everywhere be addressed. "Whatever gift there be here of the Second Queen, be it a mango-grove, an orchard, an alms-house, or aught else that may be reckoned as from that queen,—all that may be taken to be of the Second Queen, Kāruvākī, mother of Tīvara."[1]

Notes.

1. By notifying the charities of his Second Queen, Aśoka is apparently holding up her example for imitation by the other members of the royal household. *Above*, pp. 146 and ff.

Bibliography.

Bühler, G.—IA., Vol. XIX, pp. 124-6.

Hultzsch, E.—JRAS., 1911, pp. 1113-4.

Barabar Hill Cave Inscriptions.

Translation.

A.—This Banyan cave was given to the Ajīvikas by King Priyadarśin when he had been anointed twelve years.

B.—This cave in the Khalatika Hill was given to the Ajīvikas, when he had been anointed twelve years.

C.—King Priyadarśin, when he had been anointed nineteen years—in the Kha[latika Hill].

Bibliography.

Bühler, G.—IA., Vol. XX, p. 364.

INDEX

CORRIGENDA.

Page	*Line*	*For*	*Read*
48	14	III	II
69	10	V	IV
112	3-4	Strydhyaksha	Stryadhyaksha
117	8-9	practice	practise
128	n.2, l.2	Buddhists	Buddhists
188	24	Phænician	Phœnician
228	4	Omit the last 'the'	
236	2	Esparanto	Esperanto
242	21	metamorphosised	metamorphosed
248	2	son	on